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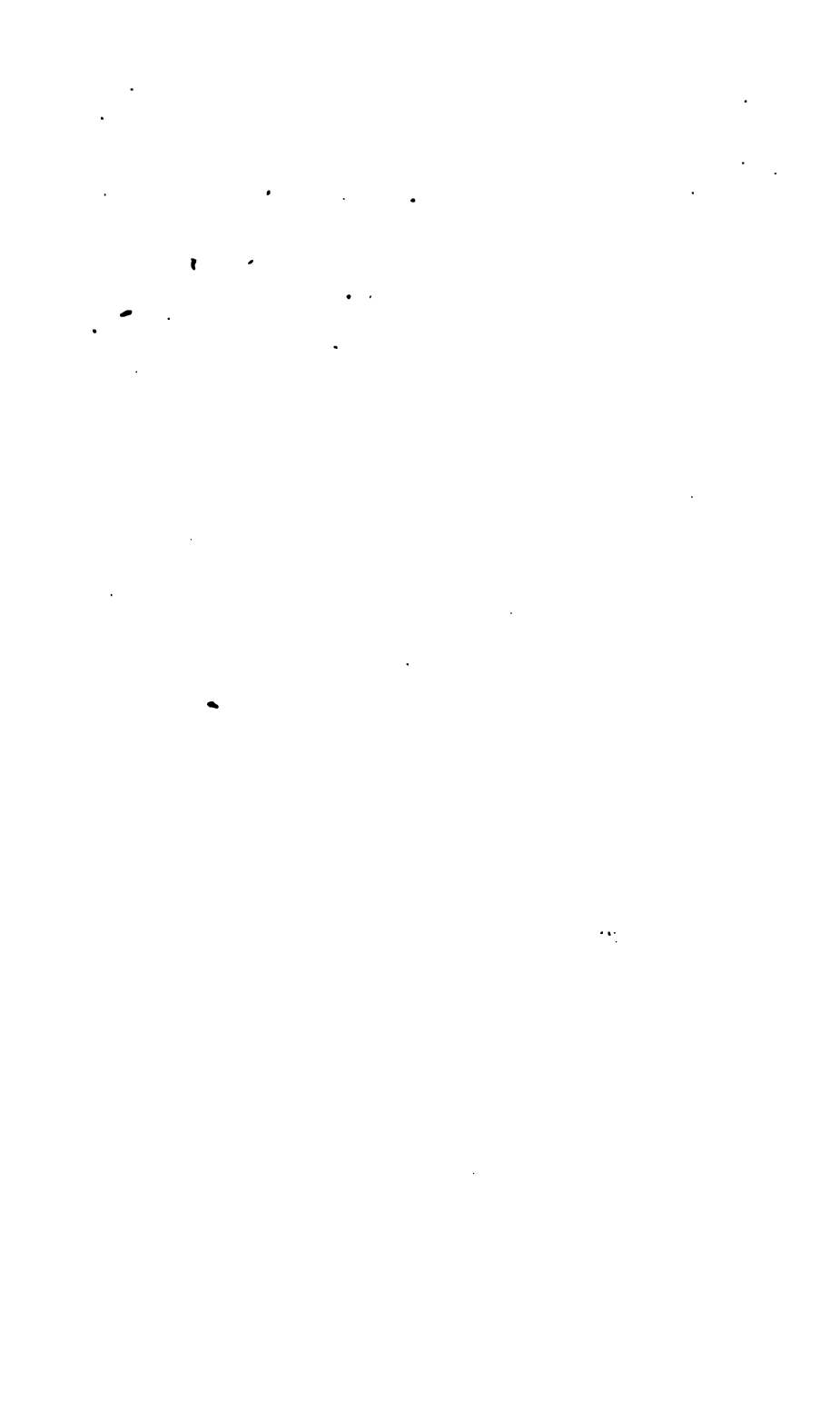
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2 Entries

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13d March, 1869.





LETTERS
TO
PROFESSOR STOWE AND DR. BACON,
ON
GOD'S REAL METHOD
WITH
GREAT SOCIAL WRONGS.
IN WHICH
THE BIBLE IS VINDICATED
FROM
GROSSLY ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATIONS.

By AMOS A. PHELPS.

New York:
PUBLISHED BY WM. HARNED,
FOR THE AMERICAN AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.
1848.

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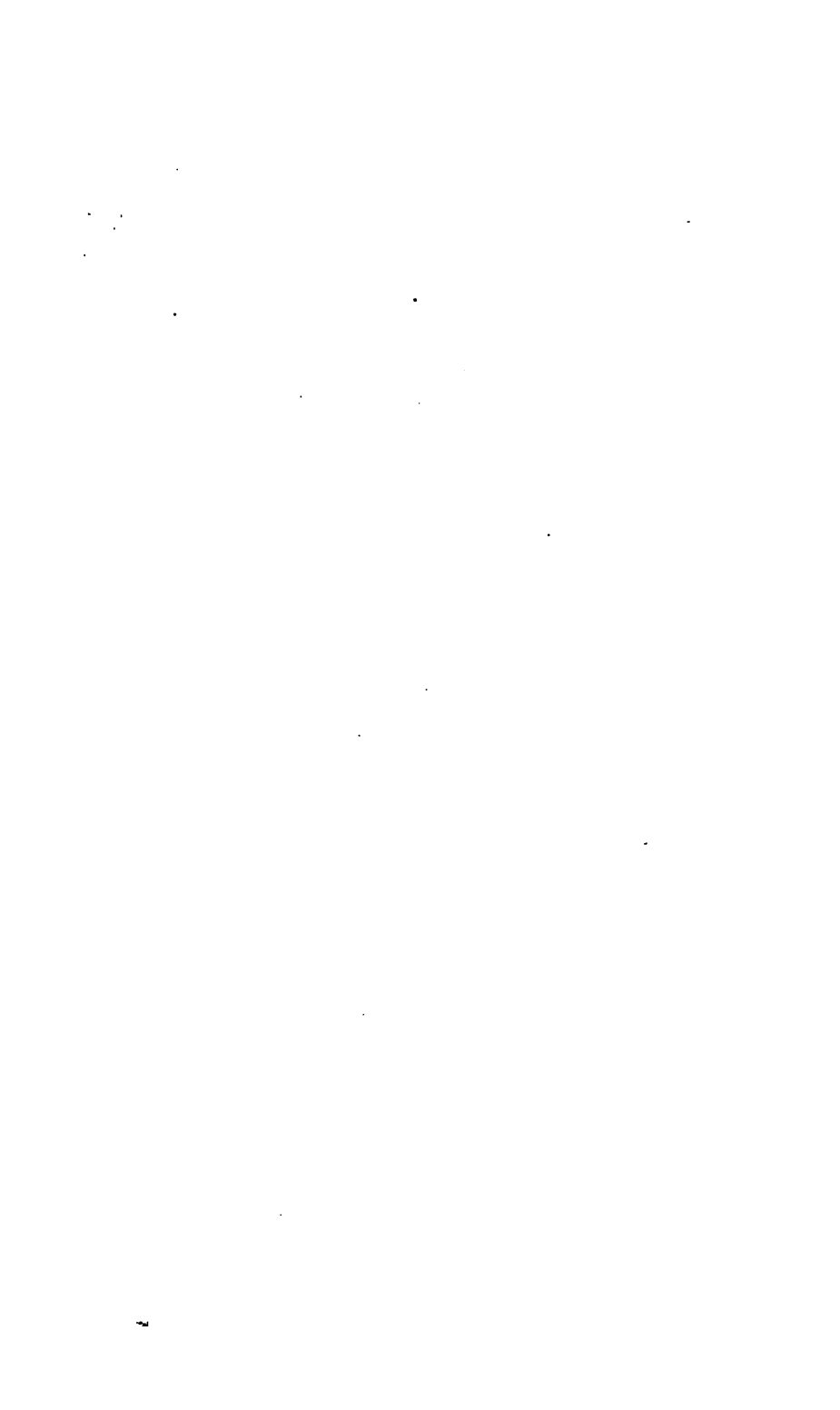
NOTE.

AFTER the return of Mr. Phelps from the West Indies he was requested by a friend to revise his Letters to Professor Stowe, with a view to their republication in a permanent form. At Castine, Maine, a week or two before his death, he performed this labor. As the writer of this note made his last visit to him, at Roxbury, Mass., four days previous to his decease, when he was scarcely able to converse, he whispered, "My letters to Stowe are ready for the press," and added, "The letters to Bacon may be added: I see no objection to it." But he had not revised the latter. He then bade his son bring the copy from another room to be disposed of as the Committee might see fit. The revising of these letters was the last literary work of our deceased brother, and the copy bore evidence that it was done with his accustomed particularity and thoroughness. This little book, then, may be considered his last legacy to the Christian public, to his anti-slavery brethren, and to the world; and the friends of Freedom, of an unadulterated Christianity, and of Gospel Missions, will prize it as an evidence of the skill, manliness, and good temper, with which he was accustomed to argue with opponents, assert the truth, and defend the Bible. The work is stereotyped, is put at a reasonable price, and it is hoped that it will have an extensive

circulation. The agency of the friends of the deceased, of those who prize impartial investigation, and manly discussion, and of those who are anxious to preserve the Holy Scriptures from adulteration and perversion, is earnestly requested, that successive editions of these Letters may be printed, sold, loaned, and circulated in this and other lands, among ministers, missionaries, and the friends of missions. By the premature death of Mr. Phelps, the Christian community have been deprived of the work he had for several years contemplated—a complete review of the Bible with reference to demonstrating its anti-slavery character. He longed to prepare such a work, and was fully persuaded that he could show, conclusively, that neither the Scriptures of the Old or New Testament afford any countenance to American slavery. Near the close of his life, he said, “I have been very desirous of completing several things that I have undertaken or planned in my mind, especially my Bible views on the subject of slavery. But perhaps God means that the Bible shall vindicate itself. The churches have fallen into disesteem, and it may be that God will permit the Bible to do so for a time.” Those letters show something what the work would have been, had Mr. Phelps lived to execute the plan he had in view. His premature decease is apparently a great loss to the world, to the cause of freedom and Christianity. But he could say, in view of the probable speedy termination of his earthly career, “I think I have done being anxious about the result, and am quite resigned to the Divine will, be it what it may.” So may it be said in reference to what he performed or left incomplete, by every friend and admirer of this ripe scholar, judicious

counsellor, and indefatigable laborer in the Lord's vineyard, this friend of man, whether white or colored, this faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Servant of God, well done,
Rest from thy loved employ:
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy!



PREFACE.

THE following letter, addressed to the Editors of the Boston Recorder, will show the nature, somewhat, of the following discussion, and how it came to be carried on in its columns. The failure of my health prevented a reply to Dr. Beecher. Consequently, and because they interrupted the continuity of the argument, some references to Dr. Beecher's letters which occurred in the first part of the discussion are also omitted.

To the Editors of the Boston Recorder :

I SEE from a late Recorder, that Dr. Stowe has written out his Brooklyn speech on the subject of Organic Sin ; that Dr. Beecher is about to enter upon a full and elaborate discussion of the same subject ; and that the communications of both are to appear in your columns.

Allow me to say, that I sincerely rejoice at this. I do so on many accounts, but most of all, because of the vast importance of the question at issue. One portion of abolitionists maintain that slaveholding, as a *present individual practice*, is sinful ; that it is always so, in the same sense in which gaming, drunkenness, falsehood, adultery, idolatry, and the like, are so ; and that being so, it is always to be treated, in the instruction of Christian teachers and the administration and discipline of Christian Churches, just as these other sins are.

In opposition to this, there are obviously but two issues that can be made up. One is, that of the Calhoun and Hammond school, in the rightfulness of slavery as a system,

and the innocence of slaveholding (not of its abuses) as an individual relation or practice—an innocent part of an innocent whole. The other issue is that of the wrongfulness of slavery as a system, but the innocence of individual slaveholding, though a part of a bad system; or at all events, its innocence *so far*, that it is not, in the same sense with gaming, drunkenness, falsehood, adultery, idolatry, and the like, a sin, and it is not therefore to be treated by religious teachers and Christian Churches, as they treat such other sins. This is the position of the good brethren named above—this, the ground taken at its late meeting by the American Board.

And this I hold to be one of the most momentous issues that has yet been submitted to the decision of the Christian public respecting slavery. It has been up before, but never so distinctly, definitely, and tangibly as now. Is slaveholding (saying nothing of personal treatment either way) a sin, and always a sin, and to be always regarded and treated as a sin, *in the same and only the same*, as is drunkenness, falsehood, gaming, theft, adultery, idolatry, and the like. One portion of the abolitionists say, yes. Drs. Stowe, Beecher, the American Board, &c. say, yes, as a system, but no as an individual practice. This is the issue. It is the last entrenchment of slavery in the free States. This carried, and slavery has then no hiding place, but the extreme resort of the essential rightfulness of system and practice both; and on that issue, the verdict of an enlightened public will not long be doubtful.

I shall regard it as a favor if you will allow me to say something in your columns in reply to the positions of Prof. Stowe, Dr Beecher and the Board.

Yours truly,

A. A. PHELPS.

New York, Oct. 13. 1845.

GOD'S REAL METHOD

WITH

GREAT SOCIAL WRONGS.

LETTER I.

THE ISSUE STATED.

MY DEAR BROTHER STOWE :

I thank you for writing out your Brooklyn speech. Allow me to examine it.

I have no time nor space to begin, as is quite usual, with long and wordy compliments. You do not need them, and I will not give them. You know me and I know you. You are not infallible, and do not claim to be. You do not think you are perfect, nor do I think you are. And I know that I am neither the one nor the other. You mean well, and so do I. But if we did not, what has that to do with the argument?

In the letter to the Recorder accompanying your speech, you gave your opinion of the Report on Slavery, adopted at the late meeting of the American Board.* I am sorry to differ with you about it. The Report does more than affirm, "that a *general rule* excluding *all slaveholders in all circumstances* from the Christian Church would be unscriptural," &c. It affirms that, but at the same time refuses to affirm, that ordinary slaveholders in ordinary circumstances, even after instruction

* The meeting at Brooklyn, Sept., 1845.

and admonition, should be so excluded. It refuses explicitly and deliberately to place slaveholding, as such, among disciplinable offences at all. This I shall endeavor soon to prove. For the present, it is enough that you admit that there is nothing in the report which explicitly and decisively disallows slaveholding as "a *permanent* condition of the Christian Church," while it commends the missionaries who have heretofore welcomed slaveholders to the mission churches as having been "diligent and faithful in their work," and does "not advise them essentially to change their method of proceeding on the subject of slavery." Now put these facts together. The missionaries have heretofore raised no question and offered no objection to the admission of any one, on the ground of his slaveholding. It is not here and there an extreme case, that they have admitted. It is all cases. In no instance, have they made slaveholding, as such, a ground of either exception or rejection. None have been deemed any the less Christian, or welcomed any the less to the church because of their slaveholding. Yet the missionaries are declared to "have been *faithful*," as well as diligent. No exception whatever is taken to their proceeding. It has rather a long and labored defence. They are told explicitly, that they cannot be advised to change it. They are not urged to change it. They are not even told that the slaveholders already in their churches must not remain there permanently, nor that no more, except in very extreme cases, must be admitted. How then can you represent the report as providing only for the excepted, and not for ordinary cases? It is certainly not a little remarkable, that a document prepared with so much care, and intended to be entirely explicit, should be so differently understood by its friends, not

less than by its opponents. Strange indeed, that one of its friends, the New York Observer, should understand it to occupy ground, so "heaven-wide" from what you suppose, that you "would sooner burn off your right hand than set it to such a paper." Yet such is the fact; and the Board and its friends ask and seem to expect, that such a document should be acquiesced in by the churches and ministry, as a satisfactory and final adjustment of the great question!

But to the speech. You give it to the public, as now written out by yourself, both as a correct report of what you said, and "as a reply to the objections which you have seen to the late doings of the Board." In doing this, while changing and omitting nothing actually said, you have yet "in some instances expanded the illustrations where expression seemed necessary to a full development of the thought." This was right. I am glad you did it. We have now the whole argument carefully matured and uttered. But I complain that while making these additions you have not made one other.

"The broad question before the Board," you say, "is this: *In conducting the missions of this Board, shall all slaveholders, under all circumstances, be excluded from the Church?*" And this, you say, resolves itself into this: "*Does the simple fact of standing in the legal relation of slaveholder always imply individual guilt in such a manner as rightfully to exclude a man from church fellowship?*" And you add—"The memorialists are understood to say *Yes*; the Committee say *No*."

This, allow me to say, does not begin to be a correct statement of the question at issue between the memorialists and the Board. We have never asked, that all slaveholders, under all circumstances, should be excluded. So far from it, we have insisted that none

should be, without the previous circumstances of instruction and admonition. Our doctrine is, and has been, that slaveholders under *the circumstances of instruction and admonition, given and resisted*, should be excluded. We insist only, that as with drunkenness and other sins, the missionary shall give instruction against slaveholding ; that the practice of slaveholding in resistance of such instruction shall be *prima facie* evidence against a man, and constitute a ground of previous inquiry and admonition ; and that its continuance in resistance of instruction and admonition, both, shall be his exclusion. We leave extreme and excepted cases to take care of themselves—to be met, as they are met in the matter of drunkenness, gaming, theft, and other sins. We seek only the general rule—the rule for all ordinary cases. And we state explicitly, that we wish no other rule in this case, than such as is universally admitted touching drunkenness, gaming, theft, falsehood, and other admitted disciplinable offences. All this was so stated, publicly, at Brooklyn. This was the whole ground occupied in the amendments offered to the report by myself, and maintained in the speeches of Messrs. Root, Webster, Dr. Ide and others. Your own attention was called personally to it, and you there admitted the difference between it and your general statement. Now I complain, that you write out and print that statement without a word of qualification, or intimation, by note or otherwise, that it fails to state the true position of the memorialists.

And that there may be no doubt that this is the issue, and the only one, made at the meeting of the Board, I beg you to observe, that the amendment which I offered, and which the Board, by a direct vote, rejected, was as follows :

“ And finally, in accordance with, and in reply to the memorials submitted to it from Worcester county and elsewhere at its present meeting, the Board deem it right and proper to say, that its funds cannot and will not be expended in maintaining slaveholding missionaries, or in building up slaveholding churches ; that in carrying out the general principles laid down in the first part of the foregoing report, in their practical application to the question of receiving slaveholders to, and retaining them in, the missionary churches, the Board will expect its missionaries and churches to treat slaveholding, in the matter of instruction, admonition and discipline, in the same manner as they should and would treat drunkenness, gaming, falsehood, bigamy, idolatry and the like ; and that whenever and wherever it shall appear, that the missionaries and the churches, in the exercise of their appropriate liberty, do not do so, it will be the duty of this Board, in the exercise of its liberty, to dissolve further connection with them.”

Here is no affirmation either way as to the sinfulness of slaveholding in every conceivable case. All that is affirmed or implied is, that it is sinful, as a general rule, and so sinful as to be treated in the “ matter of instruction, admonition and discipline ” as are the other sins named, and only as they are. This is the issue, and the whole issue. In a word, it is just this—is slaveholding to be classed among the prohibited, and if not forsaken on due admonition, among the *disciplinable offences in Christ's house* ? You and the Board say, No—The memorialists say, Yes.

We maintain then that slaveholding is to be treated, in the matter of religious instruction and christian discipline, just as drunkenness and other disciplinable offences are, and only so. You and the Board maintain that it is not to be so treated—that this is not God's way “of dealing with organic social wrongs”—that he distin-

guishes between the individual practice of these and of individual sins—that he bears long with them, and approaches them tenderly, indirectly and gradually, and that they who teach otherwise “have not learned their method from the Bible.”

LETTER II.

THE PARTIES TO THE ISSUE.

BROTHER STOWE :

I have stated the real issue in the present discussion. It is equally important, as we proceed, to remember who the parties to it are. This issue does not lie between me and you merely, but between a large body of christian ministers and churches, and the American Board ; and I do not mean, as you and I discuss it, that the public shall forget who the real and the important parties to it are. Besides, I shall write, and all will read to better purpose, if we are distinctly advised, at the outset, as to what the issue is, and who the parties to it are.

I have before shown, that the amendment, offered by myself and rejected by the Board at Brooklyn, maintained only that the missionaries and churches of the Board should treat slaveholding, in their instructions and administration of discipline, as they should and would drunkenness, gaming, falsehood, idolatry and other disciplinable offences.

In the Anti-Slavery Reporter for October, in an ac-

count of the proceedings of the Board, at Brooklyn, I said :

“ It (the amendment) raised the question whether slaveholding, as such, is to be classed with the other offences named, and whether, so classed, instruction is to be given against it by missionaries, and admonition and discipline to be administered against it by them and the churches, in the same way, and only in the same, as in respect to said other offences.”

The Rev. Dr. IDE, in his speech, at Brooklyn, in opposition to the report, said :

“ The memorials from Worcester County express the feelings which prevail in Massachusetts, and, I may say, in New England generally. Would the Board have presented such a report as this, had memorials been presented on the subject of rum-selling, intemperance, licentiousness, theft, &c., and showing that these sins were prevalent in the mission churches ? No. It would have condemned these sins at once. * * I would not say, that slaveholding in all supposable or conceivable cases is sinful, but I do say that the exceptions to its sinfulness are no more than in respect to Sabbath breaking, intemperance, licentiousness, and the like, for slavery comprehends all these, and promotes them all. But would the Committee have made the exceptions, and palliations and admissions on these subjects, which they have made in regard to slaveholding ? Would they have said, we must receive the drunkard to our churches, provided he gives evidence of piety ; and the fornicator, provided he gives evidence of piety ; and the thief, provided he gives evidence of piety ? No. They would have condemned the sin, and left it to the good sense of the churches to make exceptions when they might be called for.”

Your own SYNOD OF CINCINNATI, at its late meeting in October, with but three dissents, passed the following resolutions :

Resolved, That, to receive slaveholders into mission churches, without making the practice of slaveholding any bar to christian communion, does, in our judgment, necessarily involve the sanction of these churches to this sinful relation, and the sanction of the Missionary Board that approbates or tolerates the principle ; and that the influence of this sanction must be pernicious in proportion to the weight and sacredness of the authority that gives it.

Resolved, Therefore, that we recognize, with painful apprehensions for the purity of the gospel and the cause of righteousness generally, the fact, developed in the late report of the American Board, that slaveholders are admitted into some of the churches under the care of the Board, without questioning, from aught that appears in the report, the lawfulness of the relation, that the Board itself defends the practice.

Resolved, That, to wash our hands in innocency from any constructive endorsement of this practice, by our missionary benefactions, while we would aim to increase rather than abate them, we must conscientiously restrict them to such mission churches as do not admit slaveholders to their communion.

Resolved, That, with all due respect and affection for the American Board, we do earnestly request that body to recede from the ground taken in their late report on this subject: Because we judge it fraught with disastrous consequences to the suffering slave, to the interests of pure religion, and to the prosperity of the missionary cause."

Here, we have the issue on the Anti-Slavery side, and a specimen, for it is but a specimen, of the parties to it. On the other side, we have the following, as the position of yourself, Dr. Beecher, and the American Board.

In your speech at Brooklyn, you say :

" War, polygamy, slavery, and such like wrongs, all stand on the same ground. They are different from

theft and drunkenness and other individual, personal sins, and are treated in the Bible in a different way ; ” and having illustrated this by various examples, you add, “ these are the principles on which the report is drawn up.”

Dr. BEECHER, in his speech, as now reported by himself, said :

“ The opponents of the report wished to put the act of slaveholding on the same ground with all other sins, such as theft, murder, idolatry, &c. * * It was in reply to sentiments of this kind, uttered by the Rev. A. A. Phelps, and Dr. Ide, that I spoke. The outline of my argument was simple, and can be thus briefly stated—God, in his treatment of slaveholding in the primitive church, did not put it on the same ground as lying, theft, stealing, murder, profaneness, or adultery—and therefore, whether we understand his reasons or not, it is plain that there are reasons, and we are not at liberty to lay down general principles that would condemn his conduct.”

And though, as Dr. B. alleges, “ God’s mode of treating slaveholding in the primitive age of the church, is not a rule for us to follow in another age of greater light,” &c., still, with all the light of our age and nation, and after all the discussions of the present time on this very subject, he now, (Letter 3), deliberately, adds :

“ Even as it (the decision of the Board) is, I prefer it to the course urged on the Board by Mr. Phelps and some others ; for I considered that course to be based on false principles, and to imply a censure on the actual proceedings of God himself.”

The BOARD occupy the same ground. In their report, they say :

“ The more they (the Committee) study God’s method of proceeding in regard to war, slavery, polyga-

my, and other kindred social wrongs, as it is unfolded in the Bible, the more they are convinced, that in dealing with individuals implicated in these wrongs, of long standing and intimately interwoven with the relations and movements of the social system, the utmost kindness and forbearance are to be exercised, which are compatible with a steady adherence to right principle."

Accordingly, although the Board would by no means deem it "compatible with a steady adherence to right principles" to welcome liars, drunkards, adulterers, idolaters, and the like to a good and regular standing in the church, as the most likely means to cure them of their vices, it does propose to treat warriors, slaveholders, polygamists, and other kindred sinners in this way—provided always, that they give "convincing evidence" of being born again! And, arguing this point, the Board, in their report, ask:

"Under such influences (those found in the bosom of the church) may not the master be *prepared* to break the bonds of the slave, and the oppressive ruler *led* to dispense justice to the subject, and the proud Brahmin fraternally to embrace the man of low caste?"

And it now appears by a statement of the Prudential Committee appended to their publication of the report, that, acting on this principle, not only have slaveholders, remaining such, been welcomed to mission churches, as approved and regular members, but "rulers at the Sandwich Islands," continuing their oppressions, "have come to the ordinances of the gospel," and "men of different castes in India," continuing their caste, "have come together around the Lord's table." (See Report, &c., p. 17.) And this, with 1 Cor. v: 11, and James ii: 1-9, and v: 1-4, staring them, all the while, in the face!

Here then is the issue, and the parties to it, and the practice under it, on the other side. It is, that *slave-*

holding, as such, in common with war, polygamy, caste, and other kindred social wrongs, is not to be classed as among the prohibited, and, if not forsaken on due admonition, among the disciplinable offences of Christ's house. Nay, it claims, even, (Report, p. 7), that "the unrestrained exactions, made in the form of revenue, &c., connected with a species of feudalism, prevailing in many unenlightened communities, which are most unrighteous in their character and paralyzing in their influence," and that "those various forms and degrees of oppression, whether of law or of usage, prevailing under the arbitrary governments" of earth, shall also share the common indulgence. And this strange issue, as if God's book was not full of anathemas, and his providence were not full of judgments against these things and those that do them, plants its foot, for defence, on "the Bible"—"God's method as unfolded in the Bible!" To the Bible, God helping, I mean rigidly to hold it.

LETTER III.

PROF. STOWE'S ARGUMENT GROUNDLESS.

BROTHER STOWE :

I shall reserve a particular criticism of the definitions, or descriptions given by yourself and others of what you term "organic sins," or "wrongs," to what I may have to say in reply to Dr. Beecher. I only remark now that they are but a jingle of words without meaning, *or* that they assert a doctrine which confounds all moral distinctions; which denies

that they have their foundation in the nature and relations of things as God constituted them ; which makes that wrong to-day which was right yesterday, and that right in South Carolina which is at the same moment wrong in Massachusetts, and that sin in me which is holiness in you ; which maintains, in a word, that what human civil law ordains and general social custom demands, however devilish in principle, is both right and duty in practice, provided it be only done reluctantly and in the hope of something better by and by. Such a doctrine, I admit will save the world from fanaticism. It will save it from persecution too. By it Daniel could readily have kept out of the lion's den, and all the goodly company of the apostles and martyrs saved their lives. By it, modern missions, for the most part, have their successes, where they have any, without persecution ; and where they have no success, they are enabled to escape the persecution, by avoiding direct conflict with the baptized and organic superstitions and vices that prevail, while they give themselves quietly to preparation and patient waiting for a change of times ; and by it, papacy has always sought and still seeks to propagate the faith.

But to your argument. You begin by a reference to Christ's conduct touching the Roman government. This government, you say, "in the time of our Savior was a clear usurpation, and monstrously oppressive," and "never voluntarily submitted to," by the Jews ; and you insist, that Christ, "in his public ministration, seemed to show no disposition to meddle with it ;" that when the question of submission to it was directly urged upon him, he dodged it, and did it so dexterously that men "were astonished at the ingenuity of his evasion ;" that he commended one of its civil officers as

a remarkable Christian, and even wrought a miracle to pay the tribute rather than resist it: and that he did all this, because this is "the Bible method of dealing with organic social wrongs."

Well, be it as you represent. It proves nothing in support of your position. Admit that Christ "did not *speak out*" in this case, and that the facts you cite prove it—that as a religious teacher he did not directly attempt to remodel the *state* and re-arrange and re-order *society*, is this the part of his conduct and teaching to which we are to go for our model and rule in ordering and administering his *church*? Admit that all these oppressions did exist as organic parts and legalized customs of the Roman State, and that Christ, as head and guide of his church, did not directly concern himself with them as state affairs, does it follow that in instituting and ordering his church, he took them up, as organic parts and legalized allowances of it? Was the Roman State the model of the Christian Church? Might any and all men professing faith in Christ, give credible evidence of that faith, and walk into the church without question, however loaded down with the abominations of the Roman State?

To all this your argument comes, or it is without pertinency. Everything you here say and every fact you quote, as you interpret it, goes on one of two assumptions—either that civil government is an organic sin, or that abuses which are allowable in the state are alike allowable in the church. The question before you and the Board was not, how is civil government to be ordered and administered, but how are we, in the name of the Master, to order and administer his church? Suppose on this question, you had consulted Christ's lessons to his disciples and to the Scribes and Pharisees

in the 23d of Matthew—"Do not *ye* after *their* works"
—"Woe unto *you*, for *ye* devour widows' houses; *ye* have omitted the weightier requirements of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; *ye* make clean the outside, but within are full of extortion:" suppose you had quoted this—"Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them, but *so it shall not be among you*;" and suppose you had added—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath sent me to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Do you think, that with these and kindred texts before you, you could have stood before the audience at Brooklyn and set them laughing at the adroitness with which Christ was wont to dodge the subject of lordships and oppressions, in the business of instructing, ordering and administering his church? But I deny that he dodged these questions, as you represent, even in reference to the State.

THE QUESTION OF FACT.

We come then to the question of fact. Did Christ avoid speaking out against oppressive government in general, and the oppressiveness of the Roman government in particular, in the manner you allege? You quote three facts to prove that he did, and that in so doing he treated organic wrong differently from individual. Do they prove it? And are these all, or a tithe of the facts that bear on this point? To these inquiries I now ask your attention, and, in answering them, shall endeavor to show that Christ was neither a coward, nor an adept at "evasion."

THE FACTS YOU QUOTE ARE NO PROOF OF YOUR POSITION.

Christ, you say, "actually wrought a miracle for the sake of paying an unjust tribute, *rather than give offence.*" Yes; and on another occasion, and without any accompanying protest against the wrong, he actually taught, in so many terms, "If a man smite you on one cheek, turn the other." And when put to the test of his own principles, though buffeted, scourged, spit upon, mocked and murdered, "as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, *so he opened not his mouth.*" And are smiting, scourging, spitting, mocking, and murder therefore "organic?" Shall I carry out the reasoning, in your own terms,—“Surely Christ did not, in all cases, deal with the sins of (smiting, scourging, spitting, mocking, and murder) in the way of direct denunciation, and open attack on every individual involved *actively* in these organic social wrongs?”

But, you add, he "commended" the centurion, and said of him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," when, at the same time, he was an officer of the Roman government, and "in full command in the Roman army!" And is not the Governor of Massachusetts an officer of that civil government, and "commander-in-chief of all the forces?" Can you have a civil government, whose executive officers, from the highest to the lowest, are not, within their several limits, in full command of all the forces necessary to defend the life and maintain the authority of the government within those limits? For aught that appears, then, the centurion's office was as innocent in its *nature* as is that of the Governor of Massachusetts or the President of the United States. And in its actual *exercise*, it is clear that he was one of the Jews' best friends and largest benefactors. "He is *worthy*," said the Elders,

"for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." I apprehend, they did not particularly object to his jurisdiction, whatever they may have thought of the Roman government generally. How then can you speak of such legal relations, so administered, as one with those of slavery? Are slaveholding and civil magistracy identical? Is civil government, as a system, equally with slavery, an organic sin? Why then confound what God and nature, common sense, and truth never put together.

But you insist, was not the Roman government, as such, "a usurpation and oppression" over the Jews; and when the question of the right and duty of submitting and paying tribute to it was directly put to him, did not Christ evade that, and thereby show that organic sin is to be treated differently from individual? Not at all. What are the lessons of Christianity respecting civil government and our duties under it? Summarily, these—that civil government in its *nature* is right, and has rightful prerogatives, one of which is the necessary means of support from those who enjoy its benefits; that, within its appropriate limits its prerogatives are to be regarded and its precepts *obeyed*; that beyond those limits, we are to break its precepts, but *bear its penalties*—obeying God rather than men, and submitting to the consequences; and that we are to bear wrong, whether of penalty or unjust exaction, at its hand, just as at the hand of the individual, *without forcible resistance*—if smitten on one cheek turning the other, and if compelled to go one mile going twain. And just this, summarily, Christ assumed and taught on the occasion to which you refer; and therein answered the question propounded to him, fully, or rather made his interrogators answer it for themselves.

"Is it lawful," said they, "to give tribute to Cæsar or no?" Has Cæsar, said he, any rightful, or actual and acknowledged sovereignty and prerogatives in these parts? For this was the purport and effect of his proceeding and interrogation about the penny. Compelled by the position to which *he* had thus forced them, they answer, Yes. Very well, is his reply—"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"—the necessary means of support, so far as he has rightful and acknowledged jurisdiction, and beyond that, submission up to the point of encroachment on God's prerogatives, there, give "to God the things that are God's," and trust him for the result. Who does not see that this is the true scope and force of Christ's answer? But this is no evasion of the question proposed. That question, and the question agitated in that day among the Jews, was not, is the Roman government oppressive, but admitting this, is it lawful to pay tribute? Christ said, Yes; or rather made his interrogators say it for him, and, lest they should run to the Sanhedrim and charge him falsely there, he added, "to God the things that are God's."

My brother, you could have made out a much better case of "evasion," and perhaps as witty, from the story of the woman "taken in adultery in the very act." Only think of the unperturbed coolness with which Christ hears the charge, and then goes to marking in the sand! And when they will have his attention, see with what frigid indifference he remarks—Well, gentlemen, if things are as you say, "let him that is without sin cast the first stone," and goes to marking in the sand again! And when they have all gone out, hear him tell the woman, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." What a lesson this, to those misguided men and women, *who* in our day as well as Christ's, would

prohibit this and kindred vices by civil laws, and visit them with civil penalties! What a rebuke to those that are too over-righteous to employ adulterers as good and worthy missionaries, and welcome them as regular and approved members to mission churches! How clear it is, that adultery is "organic"—that "Christ did not in all cases, deal with the sin of (adultery) in the way of direct denunciation and open attack on every individual involved *actively* in this organic wrong!"

Nay, you need not go out of the context of your own case, to find a much stronger one, on a far less questionable subject. "By what authority," said the chief priests and the elders (Matthew xxi: 23-27), "doest thou these things, and who gave thee authority?" Tell me about the baptism of John, said he, and I will answer; and when they would not, "Neither tell I you," he replied, "by what authority I do these things." Here, on your principles of interpretation, we have not only "evasion," but a plump refusal to "*speak out*." And is the sin of doubting and questioning Christ's authority also "organic?" Clearly, "Christ did not, in all cases deal with it in the way of direct denunciation and open attack on every individual" guilty of it.

But I forbear. The question whether these are all or a tithe of the facts bearing on this point, must be reserved to my next. Meanwhile, it is clear, that Christ did not evade, nor neglect the questions propounded to him. The question you cite was but one of a series; as the context shows, all propounded about the same time and with a like design; and in reality, if not in terms, Christ answered every one of them. He did it, in that most pertinent and conclusive of all methods—an appeal to testimony that his interrogators themselves

dare not impeach, to admissions they could not but make, or to facts and authorities which they notoriously maintained to be real and valid. How then could you represent the Master as only playing the adept at "evasion" on these occasions? Such interpretations are unworthy of you. They dishonor him. Believe me, many Christian hearts, at Brooklyn and elsewhere, were amazed and pained at their utterance. Many, that cannot detect and thread their error in detail, know, in the final result to which they come, that they are false—that Christ is not such a teacher, nor Christianity such a gospel, as these interpretations make them. Their common honesty and common sense revolt at the idea of it, and neither learning, wit, nor words can ever reconcile them to it.

LETTER IV.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ARGUMENT ;

OR, GOD'S REAL METHOD WITH OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENTS
AND GREAT SOCIAL ORGANIC WRONGS.

BROTHER STOWE :

I HAVE shown that your argument in respect to governmental oppression, or oppressive civil government is groundless—that the facts you yourself quote do not sustain it, but the reverse. I now ask, are these all, or a tithe of the facts and occurrences bearing on this subject? Is there not another class of facts,

which hold a language in opposition to your position, not to be mistaken? I beg you will "study" a little with me, just here, "God's method as unfolded in the Bible."

I ask then, has not Christ in every form of his existence and administration, and in every age of the world, spoken out fully on this subject?

You, as an evangelical believer, will agree that before Abraham was, Christ was; and that the "Angel of the Covenant," the "Voice of the Lord," the "Jehovah" of the old dispensation—David's "Lord," was none other than the "Head over all," the "Word," the "Christ"—"God over all" of the new. At all events, you will agree, that Christ did not come "to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil;" that he did not, therefore, come to take back his own or his servants' former instructions; much less, to teach a lower morality and be satisfied with a looser life than they; and still less to welcome to his church iniquities that they had continually denounced and he repeatedly doomed in the State. But agreeing thus, what, I pray you, are the overthrow of Egypt, the prohibitions, by Moses, of all oppression even of the stranger and the Egyptian, the repeated judgments and captivities of the Jews because of their oppressions, the doom of other nations for the same, the bold and unceasing denunciations of them by the prophets, the predicted destruction, by Christ, of all governments and nations that will not obey and bow to him—what are these but so many forms of speaking out against governmental, as well as other oppressions and oppressors?

It would take a volume to arrange and fully exhibit the proof from these sources, on this point. In truth, a large portion of the entire Old Testament is little else

than such proof. Go we then, a moment, to Egypt, and "*study*," first,

GOD'S LESSON OF PROVIDENTIAL RETRIBUTION.

Slavery is not there. For the Hebrew (Ex. x : 9) has his family, flocks, and herds. It is only oppressive government, severe and terrible indeed, but made so, for aught that appears (Ex. i : 9, 10) by the "organic" necessity of self-preservation. It was but one of "those various forms and degrees of oppression, whether of law or usage, prevailing under arbitrary governments," the individual practice of which, on suitable evidence of piety, you and the Board would by all means gather into the fold of Christ. Now, brother, what was "God's method" as there unfolded, and Christ's testimony as then uttered?

When, (Gen. vi : 3,) by his new and *covenant* name, the Great Deliverer came, and in the execution of his purpose, (Ex. iii : 20,) stretched out his hand and smote Egypt "with all his wonders," plague following plague and judgment treading on the heel of judgment, until a baptism of blood and wail of death rolled over all the land, and its pride and strength was buried in the sea, and the shout of delivered millions on the other side, rose up to heaven, was not that speaking out in respect to governmental oppression and its organically-instituted task-masters? Was it not a clear, full, fearful, world-wide, time-lasting testimony? And in fore-warning Egypt of it and bowing her beneath it, did the Great Deliverer put in exceptions, and stay his judgments, lest, perchance, the proclamation of the general truth, the maintenance of the general law, and the execution of the general justice should bear too hardly on some

poor, pur-blind, weak-principled, and possibly innocent, organic offender? Or, did he not rather stand by and rigidly enforce all these, and thereby make his Government then, what Christ said his church should be, not the grand Lazar House of individual infirmity, and the great license shop of individual iniquity, organically induced and piously done to be sure, but "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH?" And now, according to your theology and mine, was not He, who did all this, none other than Christ himself, coming, as the "Angel of the Covenant" with "the Government on his shoulders," to deliver and lead forth his plighted people? Or, if not so, did Christ come, long centuries after, to unfold another method, to take back this testimony, and welcome to *his church*, what God, with all his wonders, damned and doomed in a *heathen State*; and not in this alone, but a *score of others*: And this too, as the opening chapter and distinctive feature of the great era of human progress! But let us "study" also

GOD'S LESSON OF PROPHETIC DENUNCIATION.

What ails God's chosen people? They are not idolaters; they are not infidels; they are not contemners of religion; they are not breakers of the Sabbath; they are not neglecters of public worship; and much less are they despisers of religious ordinances. So far from it, see Isaiah 1st, they abound in "sacrifices." God is "full" of their offerings. But it is to no "purpose." Their oblations are "vain." Their incense is "abomination." Their new moons and Sabbaths, and calling of assemblies, God "cannot away with." The solemn meeting even is "iniquity." Their new moons and appointed feasts, God "hateth;" they are a "trouble" to him; he is "weary to bear them." And when they

spread forth their hands in prayer, he tells them plainly, "I will hide mine eyes from you." Yea, when they grow importunate and make many prayers, his terrible rebuke is, "I will not hear." Strange indeed. Surely they are a devout, orderly, religious, God-worshipping people, and he a God hearing prayer. What is the trouble? Ah! "*Your hands are full of blood!*" From some organic or other difficulty, they were not a *God-obeying* people. However correct in theory, and devout in worship, they had not learned in practice "What this meaneth," "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" (Matt. ix. 13); and much less this, "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice," (Prov. xxi. 3). But God told them, as Christ told the Jews of his day, that they must learn it; that until they did it their religion was a loathing, and if they did it not, they should be a desolation. With no exceptions for organic impotents and innocents, "Put away," he said, "the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease ye to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; righten (see margin) the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow." If ye do so, he added, it shall be well, "but, if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

In Isaiah 58th, we have a similar lesson. Thy people are equally religious; and their religion seems no drudgery. They seek God "daily." They "take delight in approaching him." To all their other observances, they add seasons of special and earnest fasting. In their rigid and solemn observance of these, they "afflict their "soul." And, when, in return, they see no tokens of divine recognition and favor they are perfectly amazed. They know not how to explain it.

They are as much at their wit's end, in respect to this "strange and general suspension of divine influence," as are many of the religionists of our day. "Wherefore, say they, have we fasted, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" Because, is God's answer, of your contentions and oppressions; and he adds, "the fast that I have chosen" is "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke," &c.; and so fasting, "thy light," he says, "shall break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy re-reward; thou shalt call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry and he shall say, Here am I; * * thy light shall rise in obscurity, and thy darkness shall be as the noon day."

These are God's instructions and warnings to the "people." Hear him speak, now to king, nobles, and people, (Jer. 22.) "Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sitteth upon the throne of David, *thou and thy servants, and the people* that they enter in by these gates; Thus saith the Lord, Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place." If ye do this, well, "But if ye will not obey these words, I swear by myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation;" or, as the previous chapter, v: 12, hath it, "lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings."

GOD'S LESSON TO THE HEATHEN.

And, lest you insist that God speaks in different style to these organic sinners, because of their greater light, "Study," now, his "method" with those of other and Gentile nations. The prophets are full of it—so full, that one is perplexed to know where to make selection. Turn we, as one illustration out of many, to the 1st chapter of Amos. Here, in thirteen short verses, we have grouped together the sin and the doom of five distinct nations—Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom and Ammon. It is not a single sin that dooms them. It is "three transgressions, yea, a fourth." That fourth, as if it were the crowning, damning sin of all, is the only one that God names; and *that, in every instance, is some form of governmental oppression.*

"Thus saith the Lord, (vs. 3-5), "For three transgressions of Damascus, (the seat of government), yea, for four, (see margin), I will not turn away the punishment thereof: because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron"—(or, as 1 Kings, xiii. 3-7, describes it, "for the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them, * * for he had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing")—"But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, (the king), which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad, (the successor). I will break also the bar, (defence) of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, (of the Medes), saith the Lord"—king, successorship, people and all shall be made desolate or captive!

Thus saith the Lord, (vs. 6-8), "For three transgres-

sions of Gaza, (a principal city of the Philistines), yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; *because they carried away captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom.*" Conquering and slave-trading were their crime; and for it, "I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof; and I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Askelon; and I will turn mine hand against Ekron; and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish"—all shall share the general doom for the general sin!

Thus saith the Lord, (vs. 9, 10), "For three transgressions of Tyrus, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; *because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom and remembered not the brotherly covenant.*" Theirs is the sin of selling men into captivity, or slavery, in violation of solemn treaties; and for it, God declares, "I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof."

Thus saith the Lord, (vs. 11, 12), "For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; *because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and kept his wrath for ever.*" His is the sin, not of enslaving merely, but of hunting and holding his victim with relentless and unceasing grasp. And for it, God threatens Edom equally with the others—"I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."

Thus saith the Lord (vs. 13-15); "For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; *because they (by conquest and plunder), divided (see margin) the mountains of Gilead, (among themselves), that they*

might enlarge their border”—a true slave-holding, oppressor-grasping, land-robbing, Texas-plundering annexation and iniquity! And for it, “I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah (their capital), and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind. And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the Lord.”

NO SUCH DISTINCTION AS THE BOARD AND PROF. STOWE
MAINTAIN.

And this denunciation is continued in the following chapter, in respect to Moab, Judah and Israel, in the same strain, and for the same and similar sins, as the crowning and immediate cause. Now surely, you will not say, that in all these cases, we have only the practice of individual and personal sins, such as “theft and drunkenness.” No. Here is war, oppression in various forms, and at least governmental slavery. And, “war, polygamy, slavery, and such like social wrongs,” you say, “are different from theft and drunkenness and other individual, personal sins, and are treated in the Bible in a different way.” The American Board say the same. So far as slavery and political oppression are concerned, Dr. Beecher says it. But where, I pray you, in all these cases, do you find the difference, except it be the greater severity of the general denunciation? Where do you find God, in his prophetic denunciations, singling out lying, or drunkenness, or theft, or any such strictly personal sin, as the crowning and damning sin of a whole people? Nay, do you not know, that in the doom of Israel, in the next chapter, (Amos ii. 6-8), the fourth and crowning sin is a combination of oppression, lewdness, drunkenness, and idolatry—“selling the

righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes ;” “ a man and his father going in unto the same maid ;” and “ drinking the wine of the condemned in the house of their God ? ” Do you need to be told, that in the whole history of human experience, in every age and nation, wherever idolatry and formalism are, there is oppression, and with it, in equal malignity and power, lewdness, lying, theft, murder, and such like, and that these all are but specific parts of the prevailing generic type and expression of human degeneracy ? And in all your “ study ” of the Bible, have you and the Board yet to learn, that the Bible is true to nature ; and therefore, that in instances many, it groups all these various sins together, while in others it singles out idolatry, formalism, or oppression as the generic type and synonym of all, and then, so far from a different, deals a common condemnation, in the maledictions of the Most High ? Is it true, that in your Bible, “ Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field,” &c., does not stand side by side, with “ Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink ? ” (Isaiah iv. 7-12). Has your Bible, (Amos vi. 1-6), one “ woe ” for those “ that put far away the evil day, and cause *the seat of violence* to come near,” and another and different for the luxurious, pleasure-loving and drunken—those “ that lie upon beds of ivory,” and “ eat the lambs out of the flock,” and “ chant to the sound of the viol,” and “ drink wine in bowls ? ” Why then do you, in the general denunciation of sin and sinners, separate what God has kept together ? Why set up distinctions and make exceptions, that have no valid existence in human experience, and no recognition in “ God’s lesson of Prophetic Denunciation ” respecting it ?

You surely will not say that in these, and a score of similar cases, kings, nobles, officers and people were all one way—all, voluntarily, deliberately, and from no organic necessity, falling in with the general wrong; all therefore, individually guilty and not one personally innocent—one general rule of guilt, social and individual, with no exception! But where, in the general denunciation, does God take cognizance of those exceptions? When, where, or how, does he modify, suspend, or practically reverse the general truth in deference to them? I cannot find it. And now, did Christ come to take all this back, or to “fulfil” it? Did he come, the usherer and author of a brighter age, to unfold another method, to utter a truer testimony, to give a more discriminating denunciation, and as the result of this new light and justice, to baptize and cover in the Christian Church, what God for ages, had exposed and blasted in Hebrew and Heathen states?

We cannot “study,” as I intended and had written,

GOD’S LESSON OF PROPHETIC PREDICTION.

Enough that the very last prophetic annunciation of Christ is on this wise—“I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord.” Enough, that here, as elsewhere, personal and social wrong-doers are grouped together in a common condemnation, and that Christ never came to ungroup them, and give the lie to this and other predictions of himself, by enfolding them in the bosom of his Church. No. Even John’s heralding of him

(Matt. iii. 10), as nigh "at hand," was on this wise—
"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." How much more so, his actual coming and his kingdom!

CHRIST DID SPEAK OUT.

How then can you pretend, that Christ did not speak out on this subject? No more did he speak out against idolatry in general, or that of the Roman government in particular. No more did he speak against Sabbath-breaking. And for the same and best of reasons, in each case. These had been the subject of Patriarchal instruction, of Mosaic legislation, of Providential retribution, of Prophetic denunciation and prediction, for ages. Concerning these, in person or by his servants, Christ had repeatedly and fully spoken. His mind and will, as one with the Father, and as Messiah, were here distinctly understood. All knew, that in the Hebrew state, much more in the Messiah's church, no servant of the living God was at liberty, for any reasons, to worship idols, to break the Sabbath, to oppress, or be the slave-master of his living brother. These, as the first and fundamental elements of religious truth and duty, had been settled, finally and fully, long before, in the midst of unequalled wonders. Coming as Messiah, then, "not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil," Christ had no need to begin, as if the world had never heard of God or duty, and re-assert all these, in terms, again. He might well assume them as settled truths—as, in the main, he clearly did. And so assuming, every claim of Messiahship he put forth was, in fact, their re-assertion. Every proof of

that claim was their re-confirmation and re-establishment.

Nor did he, as you represent, say or do aught, "in his public ministrations," that looked another way. The facts you cite do not begin to prove it. And there are a multitude of incidents and texts that prove the contrary. My limits will not let me arrange and expand them, as I intended. Enough, that all his life long, in true prophetic style and spirit, he denounced the forms of violence and wrong, social as well as individual, among his own countrymen, practised though they were, in most cases, under the forms of law and in harmony with the current "credible evidence" of piety! Enough, that he told his disciples, that Jewish Rabbinism and Gentile lordship should have no place with them. Enough, that he assured them, they were to be as sheep among "wolves;" to stand before "governors and kings," Roman, not less than others, for "a testimony against them," and that in this testimony *he* would stand by, and give them a mouth and wisdom that all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist. Enough, that he himself "before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good profession," confessing to his own kingship, and telling Pilate plainly of his impotence. Enough, that before he left the earth, he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth," and that, by virtue of this, and as good against all other powers, he gave his disciples the freedom of the world, and bade them do his work. Enough that when they entered on it, and persecutions came, he shook prisons open, and startled keepers, Roman as well as other, to an acceptance of the truth, and bade his servants, "On," in defiance of the power that assailed them. Enough,

that in the end, Christ conquered, and the Eagle did homage to the Cross.

YOUR ARGUMENT AS GOOD FOR IDOLATERS AS SLAVE-HOLDERS.

And now you may not say, that you were speaking only of "the exception and not the rule." The question before you and the Board had reference to "*the rule*." We maintained, that it should be the same as in the case of drunkenness, theft, and kindred sins; that God knew no exceptions in the one case that he did not in the other; that the individual practice of all was to be classed among the prohibited things in Christ's house, and as such, to be subject to the same general course of instruction, admonition and discipline. You set up a different rule, and to justify it, attempted to show a difference of exception, and therein a different *general proceeding*. But where do you find such difference in the Bible? The whole exhibit I have now made is against it. You see no traces of it in God's proclamation of the general truth, his enforcement of the general law, or his execution of the general justice. You find it not in the public teaching or subsequent administration of Christ. The facts you cite are no proof of your position; and if they were, they prove as much for the idolatry of the Roman government as its oppression. And because Christ paid the tribute, and evaded the Pharisees, as you suppose, and commended the Centurion, will you welcome idolaters to the Church, provided, to be sure, they give "credible evidence" of piety?

NO SLAVEHOLDERS IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

And now, after God, in so many ways and instances, for centuries together, had thus condemned and doomed

oppression of every kind—as unceasingly, thoroughly, and fearfully as he ever did idolatry—is it to be supposed that Christ, the fulfiller of this same past, and the author of a new and brighter future, welcomed slaveholding, the meanest and worst of all oppressions, to the bosom of his Church? What! did God as in the cases I have cited, speak out in the utmost severity of rebuke, and then “stretch out his hand” in judgment against mere political or governmental oppression; and did he “smite with all his wonders,” kings, princes, magistrates, and even people, when their sin was but the *perversion* of the proper and ordinary forms of that (civil government), which in its *nature is right*; did he do all this, with no exceptions put in and no judgments stayed, in deference to those poor “organs of government,” acting from “organic necessity,” and unable to get out of their “organic relations” without the double consent of themselves and the “body politic; and then, did Christ, coming to fulfil all these lessons of the past, and give forth higher lessons for the future, “stretch out *his* hand,” to kiss and welcome slaveholding and slaveholders to his Church? Did he do this, when, in its best form, as a perversion of civil government merely, this is the worst of all perversions and these the worst of all perverters? And, above all, did he do it when, really, this, in its *own nature is wrong*; is no part of any of the proper and rightful forms of civil government, as such; has no rightful claim either to its name or sanctions; but as an individual act, or impious social conspiracy alone, is the most malignant of all human piracies, and they who do it the worst aggressors on their race? No. Impossible, that God should rebuke, discipline and destroy for ages together, the lesser sin and sinners in the State, and yet that Christ, in the

great era of opening light, should welcome the greater and the grosser to the Church!

And herein, besides an answer to the particular point we have been considering in this letter, "*I find my first argument to prove that slaveholders, remaining such, were never admitted to the primitive Church.*" And, if you, or Dr. Beecher, respond to this—"If the general principle was, 'let all believing masters at once emancipate their slaves,' it would have been easy to say so," I reply to that, "if the general principle was 'let all believers keep the Sabbath,' it was equally easy to say so." And when you or he will show me the injunction to converts, in terms, to keep the Sabbath, I will show you, right by its side, or rather, immediately preceding it, a similar injunction to manumit all slaves, and "break every yoke." Consult, if you please, Isaiah 58th. The truth is, brother, these were questions of religious duty that had been settled long ago, in ages and dispensations of which Christ and his gospel were but the fulfilment. There was no more need then to tell a convert, that he must cease all oppressive exactions, or manumit all slaves, or keep the Sabbath, than that he must worship Jehovah and not worship idols. Every one understood, as a matter of course, that these—the acts of obedience no less than those of worship—were elementary, primary, fundamental duties of the new, as well as of the older faith. And every convert did them, or had no welcome to the common fold.

LETTER V.

THE ARGUMENT FROM WAR.

BROTHER STOWE :

I HAVE dwelt the longer on "God's method, as unfolded in the Bible," in respect to governmental oppression, and its organically instituted task-masters and exactors, because these are so near akin to slavery and slaveholders, and for the double purpose of showing, that his method touching the lesser sin and sinners is not what you represent, and that having anathematized and doomed the lesser in the State, it cannot be that Christ came to allow and enfold the greater and the grosser in the Church. To suppose it, is to make Christ repeal, not fulfil, both the law and the prophets. It is to maintain that the preaching and practice of Christ and the apostles were not up to those of Isaiah. And I cannot but hope, that you, and the public, will admit that the clear and unequivocal testimony of the prophets is about as good authority on this question as the doubtful and contradictory testimony of mutilated fathers!

But if these and the other citations made in my last are not enough in relation to God's method with governmental, as well as other social wrongs and wrong-doers, consult farther, the plea of the Jews, that they are "*delivered to do these abominations*," and God's rebuke of it, Jer. vii. 3-10, and see if individual transgression and the practice of social and governmental wrongs are not grouped together in a common condemnation—see if the official and executive governmental wrong of not thoroughly executing judgment, and the social or governmental wrong, as the case may be, of oppressing the stranger, &c., do not stand side by side with shedding

innocent blood, walking after other gods, committing adultery, swearing falsely, and the like ; and whether, in the subsequent maledictions, God hints at any particular distinction to be made between the doers of the one and the other. And if this will not do, turn to the 18th of Ezekiel. We have here the same plea, in other terms. "The fathers," said they, "have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Now, surely this complaint was not, that in the matter of mere individual transgression they had to "bear the iniquity of the father." It was, rather, that theirs were social customs and a state of society originated and handed down by the fathers, and theirs therefore the practice of wrongs forced on them by the power of organic or social necessities, while yet they had to suffer, as if it were not so. It was, in a word, precisely your plea on behalf of slaveholders—the plea of justification on the ground of entailed necessities, and the impeachment of God, as punishing the son for the father, because in his denunciations and retributions he did not recognize the distinction, nor admit the plea. "As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have any more to use this proverb in Israel." And what a specification of particulars follows—1. being just and doing that which is lawful and right ; 2. being no idolater, not eating upon the mountains, nor lifting up his eyes to the idols ; 3. guilty of no lewdness, not defiling his neighbor's wife nor coming near to one polluted ; 4. no oppressor, not oppressing any but restoring the debtor his pledge ; 5. no spoiler, spoiling none by violence, but giving his bread to the hungry and clothing the naked ; 6. no extortioner, not giving forth upon usury and exacting increase ; 7. no acceptor of entailed or other wrong, but *withdrawing* his hand from iniquity ; and 8. no perverter of public justice, but executing true

judgment between man and man. Such a one, saith God, "is just, he shall surely live." If he beget a son that is the opposite of all this, the son only "shall die." And if *he*, in turn, "beget a son that seeth all his father's sins, and considereth, and *doeth not such like*, he shall surely live." But where, in this interesting and impressive plea for himself, does God once hint, that the son shall also thus live, provided he seeth his father's sins, and considereth and *doeth them*, in deference to be sure to great social and governmental necessities? And, surely, you will not say, that in this specification, there is no mention of the doing of social and governmental, as well as strictly individual acts. How utterly, then, in your great charity for slaveholders, have you mistaken God's method touching the doers of social wrongs. How palpably obvious, that God makes no such distinction as you set up, between the doing of individual and social misdeeds.

But I suppose it due to you to say a few words respecting

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I then do not hold *all* war to be sinful, or *all* military arrangements to be wrong, any more than *all* capital punishment, or *all* civil government, or *all* physical control of one human being over another. No, like the control of one over another, war is of three distinct species or kinds. It is either the act of the individual, breaking forth in individual violence on his fellow; or the act of the banditti, breaking forth in banded and systematic violence; or the act of civil government, breaking forth in the rightful or perverted exercise of its appropriate prerogatives. In the first form, it is identical with the violence of the individual kidnapper, fall-

ing upon his victim, and killing or enslaving him, by the strength of his own arm. In the second, it is equally identical with the combined, but meaner violence of the slave-holder, banding together, under the forms of law, but really as an impious social conspiracy, and, as such, breaking forth in the steady, deliberate, systematic and wholesale plunder of its victims—doing that on system and banditti-wise, which it could not do, and would not dare attempt alone. “*Slavery*,” as has been well said, “*is a state of war*.” And now, whether it be the war of the individual, acting by himself, or in combination and banditti-wise, will you maintain that such war and such warriors have the allowance of the Most High—that God does not condemn and visit such violence as he does the sins of falsehood, drunkenness and the like—that when done in deference to the strong law of social or organic necessities, the doers thereof are worthy candidates for the Christian Church, provided to be sure they give credible evidence of piety? Where do you find the Bible speaking thus?

And concerning the other kind of war, I put it on the same ground with any other exercise of civil government. The right in the last resort, to defend its own life, is, in my view alike inherent and God-given, both in the individual and in civil government. It is so in respect to foreign invasion, as much as in respect to domestic violence or individual crime. In all cases the right is, in its *nature*, righteous and God-given. In its *strictly appropriate* exercise it is equally righteous and God-approved. Such at least is my doctrine. Any other would carry me to non-governmentism, and thence to anarchy. And accordingly wherever the civil power goes forth, in the execution of “true judgment,” either against the individual offender or the assault of the

many, I do. not find God in the Bible, condemning it. I find him rather commanding and commending it.

That this right however is almost universally abused is undoubtedly true—as true, as that civil government and moral agency are. And just as true is it, that all such perversions are wrong, and they who practise them sinful, be the organic or social necessities of the case what they may. They are in fact only one of the forms of governmental wrong, and as such God's method of dealing with them, and with those who do them is abundantly illustrated, in the citations I made you in my last. No organic or social necessities are allowed to come in to justify, or turn aside the doom of the plunderers, oppressors and warriors of Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, and Ammon. "Organs of government" though they were, warring and spoiling by the arrangements and power of government though they did, and urged on as some of them doubtless were by the force of governmental and social necessities, yet what notice of all this have we in the general condemnation, and what staying of judgment in the general doom?

No, brother, in God's method, individual existence and responsibility are not so merged in those of the mass. The social or governmental wrong-doer, be he oppressor, extortioner, persecutor, spoiler, Sabbath breaker, or warrior, God holds to as rigid a responsibility and as deep or deeper guilt, as if he be any or all these by the spontaneity of his own will and the might of his own right arm. Any other doctrine turns civil government and its officers away from their God-appointed mission of the prevention and award of crime, and makes *it* the hiding-place and sanctification thereof, and *them* its licensed and innocent perpetrators. *That*, which has no rightful existence and exercise, and *they*, who have no

rightful prerogatives and functions, except as they are the representative and incarnation of the divine government and governor, are changed at once to sheer rebellion, and resolved into a vast license house, for the gift and sale of indulgences, provided only that the abominations done are of the nature of social wrongs, perpetrated under the decencies and forms of law, and in deference to organic and social necessities! Such a doctrine had never carried Daniel to the lion's den, nor Christ to the cross, nor the glorious company of the martyrs to the stake. And God's method, as unfolded in his word *and* ways, does not reveal it. It is the creature of human policy, not of divine, world-wide and eternal rectitude. It is creature wisdom, not the wisdom of the Highest—honorable, perchance, with men, but foolishness with God. He that sitteth in the heavens pays no such deference to mere worm authorities, which, so far from making wrong, right, and the practice of wrong, innocent, have nothing else on earth to do, except to cast their crowns at his feet, and breathe every breath, and speak every word, and do every deed, at his bidding, and in harmony with his will, "or be scourged and disciplined as disobedient, or 'dashed in pieces, like a potter's vessel,' as incorrigibly rebellious." I will examine your argument from blood-revenge in my next.

LETTER VI.

THE ARGUMENT FROM BLOOD-REVENGE.

BROTHER STOWE :

BEFORE examining, in detail, your argument from Blood-Revenge, I beg your attention, and that of the public, to the following general remarks ; and particularly to the question, whether the current theological interpretations of the Mosaic law on the subjects of blood-revenge, polygamy, concubinage, and slavery are not really among the very Rabbinical " traditions," by which Christ told the Jews they " made void the law."

You are aware that your argument on all these subjects is merely analogical and presumptive. Were it true, that God's method in respect to all these is precisely as you represent, the question still remains, whether God treats slavery in the same way. He may treat *these* as you say, and yet not treat *it* so. Whether he treats slavery thus is therefore still an open and independent question, and is to be decided by itself, on independent grounds. All that the argument from these amounts to, admitting your positions to be correct, is a *presumption* that God so treats slavery. In this view, I might dismiss the whole as having only the force of an analogy, and proceed at once to the question, respecting slavery itself. This, for the sake of shortening the discussion, I should certainly have done, but for the twofold reason, that you scarcely adduce any except the analogical argument, and that though it be only analogical and really amounts only to a presumption, it yet has all the practical effect on the general mind of direct

and substantial proof. It has this effect I suppose, because the general mind, by mistranslations, misinterpretations and philosophies, of long standing and doubtful origin, has been drilled to the belief, that the race did begin in barbarism, that Judaism was but an improved barbarism, and that, by consequence, blood-revenge, polygamy, and nameless other abominations did have the legal allowance in the Mosaic economy, which you allege. Now, for one, I hold no such view. I will not consent to take my theories of the race, or my translations and interpretations of the Bible, unquestioned, at the hands of Rabbinical "tradition," or mutilated fathers, or Papal apostacy, or unregenerate and proud German Rationalism, transferred though they be to the current theological interpretations of our land and day. For the sake of the slave, as well as the general vindication of God's truth, I will seek to disabuse the general mind of the delusions so originated and palmed upon it. I will take the liberty, and so will you I trust, to re-examine the Bible and make it its own interpreter on these points. And in so doing, I hope to make it clear, that your analogical argument is groundless—that, in "God's method as unfolded *in the Bible*," these *other* "social wrongs" have no such allowance as you represent; and that as the Bible gives these no allowance, the *presumption* is equally clear against slavery.

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"Moses," you say, "found the practice of blood-revenge nearly universal in his time," and though it was "a very wicked and pernicious practice," he "did not directly prohibit it, even in cases where the killing had been unintentional." The arrangement in regard to the cities of refuge you regard as an attempt merely to regu-

late, restrain, and gradually correct it. And "from what is said by the woman of Tekoah," you think, "that the practice of private retaliation continued to the time of David." By blood-revenge then, or the *lex talionis*, as you elsewhere term it, you mean "private retaliation" for the taking of life; and this is what you maintain Moses did not "directly prohibit."


I am aware that in this view you have the general support of biblical learning—that Michaelis, Calmet, Horne, Jahn, Robinson, &c., &c., take up and repeat this view, one after another, as if it were veritable Bible truth, when as I believe it is a gratuitous and injurious perversion of it. Jahn, for instance, says—"A law which authorizes the blood-avenger may indeed be necessary, where there is no legally constituted tribunal of justice; but as soon as there is such a one, it ought to cease. To change a law, however, or practice of long standing, is a matter of no little difficulty. Moses, therefore, left it, as he found it, but he endeavored, nevertheless, to prevent its abuses. To this end, he appointed cities of refuge." Calmet says—"To curb the resentment of these avengers, or redeemers, God appointed cities of refuge." Dr. Robinson adds—"The custom of blood-revenge appears to have been an institution, or we may almost say a principle, very early introduced and practised among the nomadic Oriental tribes. So firmly was the practice established among the Israelites, before their entrance into the promised land, and probably also even before their sojourning in Egypt, that Moses was directed by Jehovah not to attempt to eradicate it entirely, but only to counteract and modify it by the institution of cities of refuge;" and "this custom still exists in full force among the modern

Bedouins—the representatives, in a certain sense, of the ancient Israelites in the desert.”

All agree, with you, that the custom was vicious and wicked ; was of long standing ; was barbarous, and so prevalent and rife that it would not do for *God* to grapple with it directly ; that the best thing even he could do, was to hamper it somewhat by cities of refuge, and thus, by a shrewd indirection, so steal the march upon the Hebrew savages, as to bring their civil polity, in this thing, up to the amazing height of an improved barbarism ;—a great improvement, if you please, as Dr. Robinson goes on to represent, upon modern Bedouin Arabism, yet but an improvement !

Doubtless, it may seem presumptuous in me to question so much learning and authority. But with the Bible before me, and studying it as its own interpreter, I am compelled to do so, and to maintain, that blood-revenge, in the common and proper acceptance of the term, had no place nor allowance in the Mosaic economy, but the most perfect exclusion and prohibition—in other terms, that the personal, private, unofficial execution of the murderer was a thing unknown to the Hebrew law and unpractised by the Hebrew people, except in violation of the law ; and that the Hebrew polity, so far from being a modified savageism in this thing, was the most perfect and equitable civil arrangement for the punishment of murder that the world has ever seen. The limits of this discussion forbid a full illustration of this topic. I can only give some leading hints.

I take it for granted that *you* do not regard the death penalty for murder, when inflicted by due and fair process of law, as of the nature of private retaliation or blood-revenge, but only as the execution of even handed justice. If you do regard it as such revenge, I cannot



of course dispute your position. So far from it, I maintain that *such* execution of the murderer, was not only allowed among the Hebrews, but commanded by divine authority, and its neglect visited with the sorest judgments. Agreeing, however, as I suppose we do, on this point, the question before us is, not whether the murderer was allowed, after a fair trial and conviction, to be legally and officially executed among the Jews, but whether personal, private, and unofficial execution was allowed.

I do not find, that you, or the authors quoted, attempt any proof of your position. Dr. Robinson and others find the custom rife among the Bedouin Arabs and other Eastern barbarians; and, apparently, without stopping to inquire, take it for granted that theirs is the veritable Hebrew original, and the Mosaic economy, by consequence, only a restriction or improvement, in this respect, upon their barbarism. Our English translators seem to have foisted the thing into the Bible much in the same way. Duelling, says Vattel (Law of Nat. B. I., c. 13, §176) can never be stopped "till men have got rid of the *Gothic* idea, that honor obliges them, even in contempt of the laws, to avenge their personal injuries with their own hands." Among the nations, Saxon and others, that overran the Roman Empire, Dr. Robertson (Charles V., sec. 1), says—"The magistrate could hardly be said to hold the sword of justice; it was left in the hands of private persons. Resentment was almost the sole motive for prosecuting crimes. He who suffered the wrong was the only person who had a right to pursue the aggressor, and to exact or to remit the punishment." And, in note 21, he adds—"Among the ancient Germans, as well as other nations in a similar state of society, the right of avenging injuries was a

private and personal right. * * It was not only allowable for the relations to avenge the injuries of their family, but it was incumbent on them." And our translators, familiar with the barbarism of their ancestry and scarcely quit of its remains in their own time, seem also to have taken it for granted, that the early Jews were equally barbarous ; that their civil polity instead of being God-revealed grew up step by step from barbarism as did the English ; and that the old Saxon and Gothic custom of blood-revenge was also the veritable Hebrew ; and to have translated the Hebrew text, therefore, for no other reason, in violation, as we shall see, of its true meaning.

Suppose now, we study the Bible in its own light on this subject, and not through the murky medium of Saxon and Arab barbarism. The first Bible fact, in the case, that commands our consideration is, *God's oft-repeated, strict, unbending, and penalty-enforced requirement not to spare the murderer or commute his punishment on any consideration whatever.* True, every possible safeguard is put up, to prevent any one's having a murderer's doom, except he be clearly proved by "the mouth of witnesses," more than one, to be a murderer. The fact of this murder being, however, clearly shown, then nothing is to spare him. Be he high or low, prince or peasant, Jew or stranger, rich or poor, parent or child, (Numb. xxxv. 30, &c.), "Who-so killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death. * * Moreover, ye shall take no *satisfaction* for the life of a murderer, but he shall be surely put to death." And this they are to do, that they "may not pollute the land wherein" they are, "for blood, it defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein," or (see margin) "there can be no ex-

piation for it, but. by the blood of him that shed it." And, by threatened judgments, as well as this requirement, the *elders of every city* are held responsible to see the law thus executed. "The elders of his city (Deut. xix. 12, 13), shall send and fetch him (the murderer), and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, *that it may go well with thee.*" Nay, (Deut. xxi. 1, &c.), "if one be found slain in the land, and it be not known who hath slain him," the "elders and the judges" are to come forth, and acquit themselves of their responsibility by the sacrifice of an animal in place of the unknown murderer, and by the most solemn adjurations of their own innocence and ignorance of the whole affair. "All the elders of that city, next unto the slain, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley; and they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it; be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge.' And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, *when thou shalt do right in the sight of the Lord.*"

Here, now, we have something more than allowances for the execution of the murderer. We have express, solemn and absolute divine requirement, demanding that, by somebody, it shall be done. The responsibility, not of doing it themselves, but of seeing it done by that somebody, is laid on the elders of every city. No man can be *found* dead, even, within their limits, but they are answerable for the discovery, arrest, trial and delivery to that *somebody*, of the offender. Their responsi-

bility in the case is enforced by the divine assurance, that only as they faithfully discharge it, will they do "right in the sight of the Lord," or be able to "put away the guilt of innocent blood" from among them, and have it "go well" with them. They hold the divine favor and their welfare only on condition of their fidelity in this thing. The blood shed, like that of Abel, defiles the very land, and cries against them from the ground itself, if they do not fulfil their trust. Even when ignorant and innocent, and they neither know nor can discover the offender, nothing but the most solemn animal expiation, coupled with equally solemn protestations of innocence and ignorance, and supplications for mercy, can absolve them of the high and sacred responsibility.

Now, brother, *who was that somebody* to whom the elders of every city were thus to deliver the offender; in whom alone, by express divine appointment, not allowance merely, the fearful prerogative of executing resided; and on whom, especially and officially, lay the divine command to do it? Who and what was this blood-avenger? Was he any and every Hebrew, acting in personal and private retaliation of his own injuries, and those of any or of all his family? And were there then as many avengers as there were injured and angered Hebrews, each acting for himself, on his own individual responsibility, in obedience to his own personal and private resentment, the endured executioner indeed of the murderer, but the endured only because too savage and too stubborn for even God directly to tame and strip of power? All this he must have been, if he were the avenger of mere personal and private retaliation—in other terms, if his were the work of blood-revenge or private retaliation, in any proper sense of the terms.

But such he was not; nor was such his office or his work. Everything said of him in the Bible is in keeping with the supposition that the blood-avengers, so called, were few. Certain it is, that it was not every Hebrew, whose brother might have been slain, that was at liberty to avenge, as it is termed. The Hebrew term for avenger, as you know, is *goël*. Even Michaelis says this "was the nearest relation of a person murdered." Gesenius says—"Because the right of purchase and redemption, as well as of the avenging of blood pertained by the Jewish law, *only* to the nearest of kin, *goël* comes to signify *one nearest of kin*." This one, as various Scripture references would show, was the first-born, or he, who, from some cause, had come to stand in the first-born's place, and be clothed with his responsibilities and prerogatives. Thus when Gideon (Judges viii. 20), had taken the murderers of his brethren, and brought them before him, and they confessed their crime, "he said unto Jether his *first-born*, up, and slay them;" and it was not until he, through youthful fear, failed to do it, that Gideon took the work into his own hand. The avenger then, so called, was the *Hebrew first-born, or his legal substitute, and no other*. He may have been the first-born of each individual family—in which case there were as many avengers as families, but no more. Or, he may have been only the first-born of the family standing at the head of each subordinate division or cluster of families, in each Hebrew tribe—in which case there were only as many avengers as divisions. Or he may have been only the first-born of the family standing at the head of the tribe—in which case there were but twelve avengers in all Israel. Or the avenger may have been only the first-born of the family standing at the head and exercising the supreme federal au-


thority of all the tribes—in which case there was but one avenger for the entire Hebrew Commonwealth—each local bench of elders being responsible for the delivery of the murderer to him, and he being the first-born of the realm; the elder of *many* brethren; the highest in rank, authority and power of all; the depositary for the entire realm, of the highest executive trust ever committed of God to man, and never committed until after the flood, at the second outset of the race in the great human experiment. In other terms, on this supposition, he was “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”—fit type of Him, who is the First-born of every creature,” and elder also of “many brethren;” whose is a “name” (authority) above every other, and to which all others are to bow; to whom “all power in heaven and earth” is committed; and who, as bearing “the government on his shoulders,” wields the supreme executive authority, and holds in his keeping the highest executive trust of the Universe—the *life and destiny* of “*God’s*” highest “*image*,” the *living soul*. But whichever of these be the true supposition, the avenger, so called, was always some Hebrew first-born, or his legal substitute, and as such, was always the legal, official, God-appointed, and God-required executioner.

Nor may you say, in reply, that in all this God merely took up the individual as the avenger, on whom, where the custom of blood-revenge prevails, the business of avenging commonly devolves, and with the view of restraining and ultimately correcting the whole thing, clothed him with temporary legal authority and power. For, first, it is not true as a fact, that where this custom prevails, it is only the first-born who is expected to avenge and who does in fact do it. Besides, the arrangement here was not of the nature of restriction and

temporary existence. It was the fundamental and permanent Jewish law, that the murderer shall die, and die by the avenger's hand. No other executioner was provided—no other hinted. As permanent and as positive as was the requirement that the murderer should die at all, was the arrangement that he should die by the hand of the avenger. And farther, this whole arrangement, in requirement and execution, was nothing more nor less, than the old Noachic law (Gen. ix. 5)—“Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” And, with the difference only that God then reserved the prerogatives of the avenger in his own hand, this was Adamic law. Abel's blood cried from the ground; and cried all the more for having been shed by him, who, as first-born, was its natural and God-appointed civil protector and defender. And you, surely, will not maintain, that blood-revenge was so rife in the family of Noah, to say nothing of Adam's, that when they were all the people on the earth, God not only could not cure them of it, but in order to get along at all and set the race out again, was obliged to give them full swing, and absolutely command and enforce by penalty, this “very wicked and pernicious practice!” No. It was not blood-revenge, either in the Noachic or Mosaic law. It was in both a legal, God-appointed, and God-required execution of the murderer, and was at the utmost removed from everything of the nature of “private retaliation” and personal revenge. It was the perfection of civil government for the punishment of this crime.

What constitutes such perfection? What, but equity

of penalty, highest certainty of infliction, and greatest security against infliction on the innocent? And just this we have, in perfection, in the Mosaic arrangement. The penalty is equivalent for equivalent—than which nothing can be more just. The executioner, or executive rather, is he, who bears the family name, holds the family inheritance, and on whose shoulders, as the first-born, the government rests. It is he, whose official work and individual interest both are, to preserve the family name, vindicate the family honor, maintain the family authority, protect the family welfare, save the family inheritance and defend the family life. In such an executive are combined the highest elements of promptness and certainty in the arrest and punishment of the offender. In such hands, public justice cannot sleep, or move so tardily as to drive personal injury to desperation and provoke it to take the law into its own hands. All occasion and opportunity for this, is, with highest certainty, taken away. The danger, rather, is, that in some cases, it may degenerate into the suddenness and violence of the very personal revenge it is designed to supersede and prevent. Just here come the cities of refuge, not to regulate, but prevent the possibility of such revenge, even in the regular official executive. These cities are so arranged, and the way to them is so direct and unobstructed, that no man who kills another need be overtaken by the avenger before he reach one. If he be guilty only of accidental or justifiable killing, he will, of course flee thither. As he values life itself, he will flee there; nor, if he speed his way, can the avenger overtake him first. If he go sluggishly and fall thereby, he falls a victim to his own neglect. If he go not, he confesses guilt,—guilt so palpable that he had rather risk the avenger than the tribunal of his



country, and he falls, if at all, on his own confession. What an arrangement this, for bringing all to a just and fair tribunal! And once there, no power can touch them, except as the result of a full and impartial trial. If, on the trial, it prove a case of justifiable homicide, as when (Ex. xxii. 3) "a thief be found breaking up (at night) and be smitten that he die," the slayer goes free—"there shall no blood be shed for him." If it be a case of accidental killing or manslaughter, he is not to be convicted but at the mouth of two or more "witnesses," and his punishment is, not solitary imprisonment for life, or even a term of years, but a comfortable residence, at his wonted or some other employment, in the city of refuge, with every means of instruction and improvement around him, until a change in the priesthood, with the chance of having that change come, in the providence of God, at any day. If the case be one of real murder, then the offender, without alternative, goes to the avenger. And in the prosecution of the trial, the jurisprudence of the world has yet to make any improvement, in judging of the *character* of the offence, upon the distinctions and discriminations of the Mosaic law, as laid down, (Numbers xxxv. 15-34), to guide the judges and decide the verdict. What elements of equity in the trial, the verdict and the penalty! What elements of certainty for the escape and acquittal of the innocent; and what equal certainty for the arrest and punishment of the guilty!

And call you this blood-revenge—the "very wicked and pernicious practice of private retaliation?" And refer you to the interview of the woman of Tekoa with David, in proof of its existence in his day? Read that story again, I pray you. What are its leading facts? Contrary to express command, (Deut. xvii. 17) "Neither

shall he (the king) multiply wives to himself," David had become a polygamist. He was the husband of six wives (2 Sam. iii. 1-5) in Hebron. At length, by the general election of the people, he was "anointed king over Israel," (2 Sam. v. 3) and thenceforward reigned in Jerusalem "over Israel and Judah." But he "perceived (vs. 12, 13) that the Lord had established him king over Israel and exalted his kingdom for his *people Israel's sake*," not for his. "Yet," (such is the Hebrew) so far from being turned from his sin by this, "David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron." By these also he had sons. In all, his sons were six by the wives taken in Hebron, and thirteen by those taken in Jerusalem, "besides (1 Chron. iii. 9) the sons of the concubines, and Tamar their sister." As the natural result of such indulgence, David began to wane. His original courage, activity and force of character gave away to effeminate, imbecile and luxurious indulgence. The defence of his country and the conduct of her wars, he turned over to his general and servants, while he (2 Sam. xi. 1), "tarried still at Jerusalem." There, of an evening (v. 2, &c.) he rises "from his bed," walks "upon the roof" of his house, and peering into the windows of his neighbors, beholds a beautiful woman washing herself, and forthwith his lust is up, and rests not until she is taken to his bed and her husband slain—adultery and murder combined—natural and legitimate result of previous polygamical indulgence. And now the prophet comes. The message is, (2 Sam. xii. 10, 11) that for this climax of his sin, he shall now be paid in his own way—that "the sword" which had made desolate another's house should never leave his; that evil shall come up against him out of his own house; and that what he has done

secretly to another's wife, shall be done to his wives, openly, "before all Israel and the sun." His life indeed, in deference to his penitence, is spared, but spared nevertheless to meet his shame and bear the providential retribution. Meanwhile his sons, as well they might, have learned their father's vices. Amnon, the first born, (2 Sam. xiii.) instead of protecting the family virtue and honor, violates the sister of a favored brother. The father, not now a faithful dispenser of public justice, allows the crime to go unpunished, until a brother's affection, no longer able to endure it, takes the execution of the law into his own hand, and slays the incestuous monster. Conscious, however, that even such an act of "private retaliation" would not stand before the tribunal of his country, but subject him to the doom of the murderer or the manslayer, Absalom turns away from the city of refuge, and flees (2 Sam. xiii. 37-39) "to Talmai," beyond the immediate and direct jurisdiction of the king. Again, public justice sleeps; and the chief executive of the realm, with doting weakness, bemoans the absent son, and his "soul longs to go forth unto him." Joab, the old general and minister of state, (2 Sam. xiv. 1, &c.) perceives it, and while "the king's heart is toward Absalom," brings in the woman of Tekoa to complete the work. It is done. Public justice is prostrate. The fundamental and permanent law of the land respecting every slayer of his fellow, is now deliberately refused an execution. Executive authority, no longer true to its trust, strikes down the law, overrides the judiciary, screens the guilty, brings home, and at length opens its arms to receive and kiss the offender,—"and (2 Sam. xiv. 33) *the king kissed Absalom.*" Need I sketch the rest? That son, (see subsequent chapters) plotting treason to the throne that had screened

him ; driving the father, weeping, cursed, stoned and railed at, from his city and his home ; going in, in fulfilment of the divine threatening, to the father's concubines " in the sight of all Israel ;" planning and seeking the father's life ; falling at length before the providential retribution of heaven, in spite of the father's plea to have them " deal gently" with him ; and the whole scene closing up with the broken-hearted cry, " O my son Absalom ! my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son !"—what have we, in all this, but the legitimate result of staying the hand of public justice, and what but a God-stricken father penitently confessing, that he, as the stayer of *that* justice, not of personal revenge, had been the guilty occasion of all, and ought to have died rather than the offending son ? What have we, but confirmation absolute, that blood-revenge had no place in the Hebrew law, but that what you call such revenge, was the highest, most sacred, and God-required exercise of regular executive authority ?

What then is the exact import of the vexed Hebrew phrase, *goël haddom*, rendered in our English Bible " avenger," or " revenger of blood ?" The term *goël*, as you well know, means " redeemer," or " next of kin" in the sense of him whose right and duty it was to redeem. Our translators so render it in other texts. It is the very term descriptive of Christ, in such passages as these—" I know that my redeemer (*goël*) liveth"—" Thus saith the Lord, thy (*goël*) redeemer"—" The redeemer (*goël*) shall come to Zion." Had our translators rendered the term uniformly, they would have said " redeemer of blood," not revenger. But the term blood also, in the Scripture use, is often synonymous with life—as " his blood (life) be on us"—" thou shalt not stand

(Lev. xix. 16) against the blood (life) of thy neighbor." This is its use in the original Noachic law, where the blood is expressly said to be "the life," and is used as one with it. Of course this is its meaning in the incorporation of that law into the Hebrew polity. The true import of the phrase above then, is, "life-redeemer," in "the redeemer of the life."*

Now, in this import, we see at once who the Hebrew goël was, and at what an infinite remove his office and work were from that of private retaliation and personal revenge. He was the Hebrew first-born. As such he bore the family name, and his brethren in being called after it were called after him. He was heir to the entire original family inheritance—"all that I have," said the father of the prodigal to the elder brother, "is thine." His brethren were joint-heirs with him. If in the use of the portion committed in trust to them, any part of the inheritance became alienated, it was his to re-purchase, redeem, restore it. He was invested also with the family authority. As its highest executive, the government was on his shoulders, his brethren were his subjects and he their protector and defender. None could injure them, but as they injured him; and none could pluck them out of his hand, so far as he had power to defend and rescue. Let who would attempt it, he stood forth the life-redeemer, to protect and save, or in default of that, to demand the life of the offender in expiation of his crime. And all this he did, as the divinely constituted and legal civil head and executive of his brethren.

* It is worthy of note that the Bible never speaks in the plural, of avengers or revengers. The term, in the Hebrew, is always in the singular number. It is so in the English translation, with but one exception, (2 Sam. xiv. 11) and there, as is the fact, and as the margin shows, it is singular in the original, and should have been so translated.

And in this, what, brother, was the Hebrew first-born, as the goël of the Hebrew state, but the representative and type of the Great First-born, as the goël (Redeemer) of the world? And how fitting! As with the type, so with the anti-type. *He* is the "first-born among many brethren." Of him, "the whole family in heaven and earth is named." He, is "heir of all things." To whom are given "all things that the Father hath"—the entire inheritance of the Godhead. All that are his are "joint-heirs" with him, "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." To him, as the great executive, "all power is given in heaven and in earth." "The Government is on his shoulders," and his people, like the Jews, are not to avenge themselves, but leave judgment to him. In his deep heart of love, all injury to them is injury to him—"inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." In his steady care and mighty power, no enemy can ever pluck out of his hand, or escape his official and righteous retribution. Against all aggressors, in heaven, earth and hell, he is the great protector, the inheritance-restorer, the life-redeemer of his people—the protector, restorer, and redeemer of soul *and* body, as the Hebrew goël was of the body only.

Is it not so? Was not the Hebrew life-redeemer of the body the type, and fitting type, of the great life-redeemer of the soul? And was not the work of the one at as utter a remove from "private retaliation" and personal revenge as that of the other? Or, do I read the sacred page only with perverted eyes? Had the great anti-type after all, no type; or nothing better as a type, than some wild Arab or savage Saxon, too stubborn for even God to manage, except tenderly and by

indirection? O no. It cannot be. Away then with this strange perversion of God's book—this Saxon and Bedouin profanation of the glorious word of life. But putting it away, and admitting for once, that a God-revealed civil polity was really something better than an improved barbarism, what, brother, becomes of the argument for slavery from blood-revenge?

LETTER VII.

THE ARGUMENT FROM CONCUBINAGE AND POLYGAMY.

BROTHER STOWE :

WE are now prepared to "study God's method" respecting concubinage and polygamy. You present two arguments to show that God's treatment of these is different from his treatment of "theft, drunkenness, and other individual personal sins." The first is, the silence of the Scripture, as to any express rebuke, in its record of the practice of these things by the patriarchs, coupled with God's continued communion with them. The second is, that "the Mosaic code nowhere prohibits," but regulates and temporarily allows them. Are these arguments sound?

ARGUMENT FROM THE SILENCE OF THE RECORD.


In presenting the first, Abraham, you say, "cohabited with his maid-servant, and by her had a son. God had several interviews with him, gave instructions respecting the son and his mother; but never, *so far as the record goes*, reprov'd him for what he had done, or told him it was wrong, or forbade him to do it again." In like

manner, Jacob, you say, "cohabited with no less than four women, two of whom were wives, and two were concubines. He had children by all, not successively merely, but contemporaneously," and "was enjoying communion with God all the time. God manifested himself to him; gave him directions as to his conduct, treated him with affection and kindness, but never, *so far as the record goes*, reproved him for living with four women, and never told him that Leah was his only lawful wife, and he must confine himself to her"—a pretty shocking statement to be sure, but yet, as you allege, only "the Bible method of dealing with social evils and organic wrongs of long standing."

This argument, you observe, has no force, in the question at issue, except on the ground that the "silence" and the "communion" in these cases is entirely different from the silence and communion in the case of "individual, personal sins;" or rather on the ground, that while there are silence and communion in the one case there are none in the other. If it shall appear that there is the same silence and communion in both, your argument is as good for lying, drunkenness, theft and the like, as for concubinage and polygamy. What then are the real "Bible facts?"

ABRAHAM'S LIE AND NO REPROOF.

On two several occasions, (Gen. xii. and xx.) Abraham, yielding to his unbelieving fear, and taking advantage of a technical truth, makes statements respecting himself and wife, which were practically and really a lie. They had all the effect of an unqualified lie, in respect to those to whom they were addressed, and were intended to have it. In the fullest sense, they were an *intentional deception*. Nor was this done in the hurry



and alarm of the moment. He was deliberate in it. His wife too was privy and consenting. When, in obedience to the divine command, and on the strength of the divine promise to multiply and bless him, (Gen. xii. 3) he first left his father's house, afraid to trust that promise fully, it was agreed between himself and wife beforehand, (Gen. xx. 13) that "at every place," whither they should come, she should say of him, "He is my brother," while he said of her, "she is my sister." Acting upon this social and organic arrangement they went to Egypt. The premeditated lie was told. The Egyptians beheld the beauty of the alleged sister, and supposing the deception to be a truth, took her to their monarch's harem. Well pleased, "he entreated Abram well for her sake," (Gen. xii. 16, 17). "Yet the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife."

Some twenty or more years elapse. Meanwhile, Abraham comes up from Egypt; separates from Lot; conquers the kings and rescues Lot; has repeated interviews with the Lord; enters into formal covenant with him, and has the promise both of the land as an inheritance and a son as heir; seeks to hurry God, in the matter of the heir, by going in to a maid, but is defeated therein; and then, after more intimate communions with God than ever, (chaps. xvii., xviii., xix.) comes to the country of Abimelech, in the ripe maturity of between ninety-nine and a hundred years of age, (Gen. xvii. 1, and xxi. 5). The old temptation assails him. He knows the beauty of his wife. He sees the wickedness of the people, especially in the matter of licentious and polygamical indulgence. He "thought (Gen. xx. 11) surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will *slay me* for my wife's sake." Not ready even yet

to trust his God implicitly, the old fear prevails and the old lie is told. Abimelech takes the "sister" to his harem. He does it (v. 5) in "the integrity of his heart and innocency of his hand," as to any supposed taking of another's wife. God (v. 6) admits his "integrity." Yet no sooner had Abimelech done it, than God's judgments overtook him. "The Lord (v. 18) fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarai, Abraham's wife." He even (v. 3) "came to Abimelech, in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken."

But where, in all this history, are the reproofs of Abraham? As you interpret, there are none, but rather commendations. God blesses him all along. He comes up from Egypt (Gen. xiii. 2) "very rich, in cattle, in silver and in gold." In his subsequent residence in Canaan he still prospers. In Gerar, his very lie seems to turn to his advantage. Abimelech (xx. 14-16), on finding what had been done, "took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife, and said, Behold my *land* is before thee, dwell where it pleaseth thee; and unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother *a thousand pieces of silver*." God too keeps "communing" with him. He tells Abimelech (xx. 7), "he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live." And, "So (v. 17) Abraham prayed unto God; and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants, and they bare children." And throughout the whole, as you interpret, "God never, *so far as the record goes*, reproofed him for what he had done, or told him it was wrong, or forbade him to do it again!" And subsequently, (Gen. xxvi. 7) in the same Gerar and among

the same polygamical Philistines, Isaac tells the same lie in respect to his wife, and for the same reason—“She is my sister : for he feared to say, she is my wife, lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she is fair to look upon.” But as you interpret, not a word of reproof, “*so far as the record goes,*” did he receive.

JACOB’S EXTORTION, FRAUD AND FALSEHOOD.

So in respect to the extortion, cheating and lying of Jacob. Taking advantage (Gen. xxv. 27–34) of his brother’s irregular habits and consequent necessity, instead of readily bestowing a little food to stay his faintness and satisfy his hunger, he shuts up his compassion, seizes upon that as a lucky moment to extort a bargain, and wrings the birth-right from a starving brother for a mess of pottage, that in common charity, to say nothing of the ties of brotherhood, he should have given him. The years roll on. The father (Gen. xxvii. 1) becomes “old and his eyes dim.” In expectation of approaching death, he thinks it time to arrange his household, and especially to settle the succession of the birthright. By the fraud and falsehood of the mother and son, the younger son obtains it. By a bold cheat, with falsehood added, he is confirmed in the original extortion. And now (Gen. xxvii. 41–45) he trembles for his life before an injured brother. A new lie (v. 46) is trumped up by the mother, with his connivance ; and away he flies from a brother’s anger, on pretence to the father, forsooth, of only going to get a wife ! And through it all, as you interpret, “God never, *so far as the record goes,* reproved him for it, or told him it was wrong, or forbade him to do it again.” So far from it, on the very first night of his escape, God met and

“communed” with him, (Gen. xxviii. 10–22) in that remarkable vision of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with the “angels of God ascending and descending upon it.” At that hour, moreover, God entered into special covenant with Jacob, confirming him in the possession of the extorted and stolen birthright. Nor in all this interview, when the last lie and imposition were yet scarcely cold, was there, as you interpret, “*so far as the record goes*,” a solitary word of reproof.

OTHER INDIVIDUAL SINS.

I need not sketch the story respecting the lies of Joseph’s brethren, (Gen. xxxviii. 32); the lie of Rahab, (Josh. ii. 1–6); the lie, murder and plunder of Simeon and Levi (Gen. xxxiv. 13, 25, 29); the drunkenness of Noah (Gen. ix. 21) and of Lot, (Gen. xix. 33); the theft, falsehood, and probable household idolatry of Jacob’s wife (Gen. xxxi. 19–35, and xxxv. 2); the incest of Lot’s daughters, (Gen. xix. 32–36), with the lying and whoredom, not to say incest of Judah (Gen. xxxviii. 11, 14–18), and other similar cases, where we have indeed the facts, and very generally the natural results and providential retributions, but, as you interpret, never a word of reproof, or of direction not to do so again, “*so far as the record goes*.” You can “study” these for yourself. Meanwhile, are these too “social and organic wrongs?” Have we this silence of record here too, because this is “the Bible method of dealing with social evils and organic wrongs of long standing?” Or must we find another interpretation in all the cases in question—one equally the antagonist of all vice and crime, and therefore, worthy of God and honorable to his blessed word? Plainly, we must. The argument from the silence of the record is as strong for lying, extortion, fraud, theft, drunkenness, incest, murder, plun-

der and whoredom, as for concubinage and polygamy. In some respects it is even stronger.

Nor may you say here, that the one are expressly forbidden elsewhere, while the other are not. That is another question altogether, and is yet to be proved. But if there be a difference of treatment in the matter of *express prohibition*, it changes not the fact, that there is none in that of *historic record*. Here, as we have seen, all these sins stand on the same footing. God, the *historian*, treats them all alike. He knows no difference, and gives no hint of any allowance of the one, which is not equally lawful in respect to any and all of the other.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE MOSAIC CODE.

How then stands the case with God, the *lawgiver*? "The Mosaic code," you say, "nowhere prohibits polygamy and concubinage, but makes express regulations in regard to both; and even in regard to temporary concubinage, without once intimating in the statute that they are wrong." And you refer to Ex. xxi. 9-11, and Deut. xxi. 10-16, as proof.

I take it for granted, that if it shall appear on examination, that Moses did expressly prohibit polygamy, you will allow concubinage to go with it. And, if the case cannot be made out in respect to the gross, common, general Gentile polygamy, but only in regard to the more refined, better regulated, less extended, and special polygamy of the patriarchs, I presume that will be enough, and that you will consent to have patriarchal and Hebrew, if not Gentile concubinage, go also among the things prohibited. You surely will not hold on to a Bible allowance for mistress-keeping, after we find there is none for more than one lawful wife. To simplify our inquiry then, we will "study" in my next, the law with reference to polygamy.

LETTER VIII.

THE ARGUMENT FROM POLYGAMY.

ALL POLYGAMY FORBIDDEN.

BROTHER STOWE :

THE end of this discussion does not require, nor do my limits allow, that we go into a full examination of the subject of polygamy generally. I will only remark then,

1. Christ does not say or intimate that Moses allowed polygamy, but only *divorce* for more than one cause. And of this Christ says merely, that Moses, legislating for the state, and therefore for regenerate and unregenerate both, allowed it "for the hardness of your hearts;" but, that in a community, like his church, where the members by their very regeneracy are supposed to be cured of hardness of heart, this allowance must of course cease, and the marriage relation stand upon its original foundation, of being dissolved for one cause alone.

2. Christ nowhere prohibited polygamy, in terms, himself; nor did his apostles do it. Whenever either refer to the subject, in any way, it is not, so far as I know, in the way of new prohibitions, so that if the Mosaic or Patriarchal code did not prohibit polygamy, it has no prohibitions to this day. What the apostles say of bishops and deacons, is not a prohibition of polygamy in them, admitting its allowance in others, but is simply a requisition that those officers in the Church shall be *married men*.

3. Moses did, confessedly, prohibit all those forms of licentious indulgence, and those customs, which are the natural and uniform concomitants of polyga-

my, the world over. Eunuchism was perpetual excision from the Hebrew state (Deut. xxiii. 1). Illegitimacy (v. 2) cut off from "the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation." The married woman, if found to have lost her virtue previously, was to be brought forth (Deut. xxii. 21) and stoned "with stones that she die." Sodomy and prostitution of every kind, and all the various forms of incestuous indulgence, peculiar to the prevalence of polygamy, were prohibited in the most stringent and fearful manner, (Lev. xviii. and xx.) You may say, I know, that this was only in the way of regulation and restraint. I think the presumption is, that God would not forbid the lesser and spare the greater—the fountain head and putrid source, in fact, of all. As well may you allege, that his prohibition of the manifold accompaniments of idolatry, were but a regulation and restraint of that.

4. Moses expressly forbade polygamy to the king. Just where, from the customs of other nations, and the facilities for indulgence, the temptation would be greatest and the example most mischievous, God takes care most expressly to prohibit it—"Neither (Deut. xvii. 17) shall he (the king) multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." I know Michaelis, and Jahn, and most of the current biblical learning on this subject, hold this to mean, only that the king must not have a harem, with a score or more of wives, though some four or so were quite allowable, as well as scriptural! Jahn says—"It is true, he did not say precisely how many they should have, but *probably* meant the number should be limited by the custom of his time. Perhaps, therefore, the number was four, which is the exposition advanced by the *Rabbins and Mohammedans*, and is in a measure supported by the example of Jacob!" Doubt-

less, Rabbinism, which Christ characterized as making void the law by its traditions, helped out with a little Mohammedanism, must be excellent authority in this matter! I think, the visitations that overtook Jacob, the calamities that overwhelmed David, and the uniform providential rebukes of heaven on other sinners of the kind, all coming as the natural result and in the direct line of their sin, a somewhat better exposition, and a proof, withal, that such learning has its origin anywhere but in the Bible.

5. In the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," God prohibited all polygamy, in king and people too. I know the learned gloss here also—that this, forsooth, only meant, in those days commerce with another man's wife, and by no means forbade commerce with four or forty of one's own! But I eschew such interpretation as gratuitous perversion of God's book and insult of its author. In fact, it is the identical perversion of the law, which Christ quoted and corrected, as one of those traditions by which "them of old time" had "made void the law." If the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," did not forbid more than one wife originally, what proof have we, or can we have, that it does so now? Go then, if such be your interpretation, and take another wife, or two, or twenty, and if the civil law arraigns you as a bigamist, plead the seventh commandment in arrest of judgment. No, brother, that will never do. Bigamy, polygamy, and mistress-keeping, under the polite name of concubinage, and everything of the kind can have no existence, and never could, under any proper interpretation and administration of this law of the decalogue. By its one broad precept they were forever proscribed and swept away from all legal allowance.

PATRIARCHAL POLYGAMY IN PARTICULAR FORBIDDEN.

But dispose of these hints on the general subject as you may, this is certain, that such polygamy as Jacob's had a prohibition which no man can gainsay or deny. Turn we now and "study" the xviii. of Leviticus. The chapter opens thus—"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in *their* ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances to walk therein: I am the Lord your God." These doings and ordinances are then specified in the way of express prohibition. They are, you observe, social evils of long standing, and entrenched, as peculiar institutions, behind social, and in some cases perhaps, organic "ordinances." They are all some form of the impurities evermore attendant upon prevailing polygamy. When the specification is completed, God enforces the whole in the following manner—"Defile not yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you. Even the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; that the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people."

Now among these abominations, so fearfully prohibited, I find, (v. 18), the following—"Neither shalt thou

take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other, in her lifetime." The margin renders this—"Neither shalt thou take one wife to another." This, I supposed to be the true rendering of the original; and as such, it is an express, unqualified and absolute prohibition of all polygamy. But as some learned philologists insist that the present is the correct rendering, I am willing, in this discussion, to admit it. So understood, the text becomes a prohibition of all marrying of two sisters during their mutual lifetime. And what is this, but a prohibition, equally express, unqualified and absolute, of all patriarchal polygamy? Be it, that common Gentile polygamy is spared, patriarchal, that of good old Jacob, notwithstanding his "enjoying communion with God all the time," is put under the ban. Nay, it is ranked among those "abominable customs" that provoked the visitations of God, and made the land sick to vomiting of her inhabitants, and that were to do so again if the Jews indulged in them, and that doomed all who committed any of them "to be cut off from among their people." Patriarchal polygamy then, whatever was true of other, was, by the "Mosaic code" an abomination,—a Gentile abomination too, and its practice was excision from the Hebrew state. It existed only in violation of the law, and at the risk of its excising penalty. I am content to leave the question respecting the common, unbridled, gross and beastly Gentile polygamy. I think that could hardly stand where patriarchal was so thoroughly proscribed.

PROF. STOWE'S PROOFS ANSWERED.

And now, call you this "abomination," an "indiscretion" only? Refer you still to the texts cited, in proof of its allowance in the law? And point you also to the

polygamy of Joash, (2 Chron. xxiv. 1-3) in illustration of its being "encouraged by so good a man as Jehoiada, the high-priest, at a very late period in the Hebrew commonwealth?" Let us read those texts and "study" that story again.

The first text you cite, (Ex. xxi. 7-10), says not a word of concubinage or polygamy. It speaks only of betrothal as a wife, to one's self or son, and of what is to be done for the betrothed, if from any cause the marriage be not consummated, and another betrothed be taken. The betrothal, if consummated, would of course make the betrothed a wife, with adequate support. If now the betrothal be to the father, and he refuse to consummate it, the betrothed is not to suffer his wrong—"he shall let her be redeemed," or as the original is "he shall redeem her," or "cause her to be redeemed." She stands ready to fulfil her part of the engagement, he must equally fulfil his. He gave the dowry at the time of the betrothal as the pledge that he would do it. If now he will not, he shall pay her ransom, in the forfeit of the dowry. Nor shall he have power, in order to refund the dowry to re-sell her elsewhere; for he has acted "faithlessly," and he shall bear his own wrong. And if the betrothal be to the son, the father meanwhile shall stand to her in the place of her own father, and "deal with her after the manner of daughters"—giving her food, raiment, and home. And if the son coming to act for himself, "take another" betrothed, no change shall be made in the provision for the first. She shall be a daughter still. "Her food, her raiment, and her home" shall not be diminished. If they are—in the least particular—if the father "do not these three unto her," she shall go out gratuitously, as before, taking her dowry with her. In the one case, the father must marry in

good faith, or forfeit the dowry, and she be quit ; and in the other, the son must do it, or the father support her as a daughter, or the dowry be forfeit and she free, as before. Nor is the phrase "duty of marriage" any objection to this view. It is a mere begging of the question, or a violation of the whole context, to consider it as meaning "cohabitation," in the sense of sexual commerce, and not cohabitation in the sense of a home "after the manner of daughters." The original word, as you know, is used but twice in the Bible—once here, and once in Hosea x. 10. In Hosea our translators render it "furrows"—the margin, "habitations." The word itself also comes from a verb that means "to dwell." Home, then, "after the manner of daughters," not sexual commerce, after the manner of a mistress, is the true meaning. And if so, what is all this, but a most admirable arrangement to give sacredness, inviolability and force to plighted matrimonial vows? And call you this polygamy and mistress-keeping!

Your other text (Deut. xxi. 10-16) is as little to the purpose. It says nothing of concubinage or polygamy. My limits will not allow a minute exposition. I remark generally, that the passage speaks only of the marriage and divorce of a wife, and of the law of inheritance, when, from the divorce of a disliked wife and the subsequent marriage of another, a man comes to have, *successively*, not at the same time, two wives, one beloved and another hated. In other terms, the passage announces one of the Mosaic restrictions on the allowed right of divorce; and a most effective restriction it was. True, a man might put away a wife that he did not like, whether that wife were an original Jew, or a stranger become a Jew. And he might then go and take another, and a favored one; but if there had been male off-

spring by the first, the birth-right, and with it, the family name, honor, authority and inheritance were to go to him. The whole force of the family name, honor, authority and interest was thus brought to keep every man content with his first love, and so to be a standing check upon all divorce. To announce this law in connexion with the law for the marriage and divorce of a stranger as a wife, is the whole scope and end of the passage now in question. And the whole drift of it shows that the phrase, "if a man have two wives," does not mean two at the same time, but one after another, as the natural result of the divorce just spoken of and allowed. But if it does mean two at the same time, it proves no legal allowance of polygamy. It only says,—if a man, in violation of the law elsewhere laid down, has two wives at the same time, one beloved and another hated, as was the fact with Jacob, he shall not, like Jacob, undertake to give the offspring of the favored precedence of the other. The birthright, and all of family honor and interest wrapped up in it, shall go as if he had but one. And what is this but another condemnation, at least of patriarchal polygamy?

And as to polygamy's being "encouraged (2 Chron. xxiv.) by so good a man as Jehoiada, the high priest," the whole story is but a record of God's judgments in consequence. "Joash," so the record runs, "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest. But (2 Kings xii. 3) the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. And (2 Chron. xxiv. 3, 4,) Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters. And it came to pass *after this* (in evident return for the indulgence) Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord." And the entire subse-

quent history is just a record of the way in which Jehoiada's compromise, to enlist the zeal of the king in the promotion and support of religion, after a temporary prosperity, defeated itself; and then the sins so connived at, by the most natural course of degeneracy and providential retribution, brought wrath on Judah and Jerusalem (v. 18); killed Jehoiada's own son (v. 21); brought judgments on the princes of the people (v. 23, 24)—“So they executed judgment against Joash;” and finally killed Joash himself (v. 25), and buried him in a dishonored grave. Yes, Jehoiada did encourage polygamy, and thought to promote religion by it. But God put his ban upon the sinful connivance, and by sad reactions and bitter judgments exposed its error, and taught the world his deep abhorrence of polygamy and all its connected sins. And now do you ask, “if in the days of Abraham and Jacob there had been an organized church, distinct from the family, it would have been the duty of the minister, under the circumstances, to exclude them from its communion, because they practised polygamy?” I will attempt an answer in my next.

Meanwhile, what has become of the argument from polygamy, concubinage and blood-revenge for slavery? If these stand among the things prohibited, does not slavery stand there too?

LETTER IX.

GOD'S METHOD WITH THE EXCEPTIONS.

OR, THE CASE OF ABRAHAM CONSIDERED.

BROTHER STOWE :

I HAVE shown in former letters, conclusively I hope, that in his proclamation of the general prohibition, his utterance of the general denunciation, his administration of the general discipline, and his infliction of the general doom, God recognizes no such distinction and makes no such difference of treatment, as you allege, between the practice of individual and social wrongs.

To this, as the *general rule*, you will perhaps assent ; but insist that your position and the Board's relates only to those cases that may fairly be considered as *exceptions* to the rule. Why then did not you and the Board affirm the rule, and leave exceptions to be provided for as they might rise, as God does, and as the friends of the slave specially and distinctly desired you to do ? There was no pretence that the slaveholding in the mission churches was anything but common and ordinary. Not a word was uttered, nor a hint given, that it was an exception, and as such might have a temporary allowance *contrary to the general rule*. But, were it otherwise, why I repeat, affirm the rule for the exception, and refuse, as you did, to affirm the rule for the non-exception ? Such is not God's method ; and such had not been your's and the Board's, had you and they followed his.

But, that there may be no evading the entire and exact issue, we will now go a step farther, and "study," if

you will, "God's method" with the exception. We will select a single individual, answering in the fullest sense to your good slaveholder. To this end, he shall be an undoubted servant of God. He shall be guilty both of individual transgression and of social wrong. In their commission, he shall act under the most trying circumstances, and, as he thinks at the time, with the most benevolent motives and the best intentions. His sin, therefore, as far as in the nature of things it can be, shall be the sin only of the "mere external relations." Concerning such an one, we will inquire whether God did not in fact, thoroughly *reprove* and *discipline* him for the practice both of the social and the individual wrong; and whether, in so doing, he made any such difference between the two as you allege. And that there may be no question respecting the piety of this individual, we will select one or more of your own chosen patriarchs.

We will begin with Abraham. And here, you will observe, as we proceed, that the facts warrant a much stronger statement of the case than I have made. They show, not only that God reprov'd and disciplin'd Abraham for his practice of the social as well as the individual wrong, and made no such difference in favor of the social as you allege, but that he reprov'd and disciplin'd him most for his practice of the social wrong, and did not admit him to regular and approved church relations, until effectually divorced from it, but did admit him to such relations before he was thus divorced from the other.

Says Dr. Dwight (Theol. vol. 4, Ser. 158), "Circumcision was the same ordinance with baptism." And in proof of it, he remarks—"1. It was appointed to be a token of the covenant between God and his church

2. It was the *initiator* seal of this covenant. By this I intend that it was the public means of *introducing* the Israëlites into covenant with God." And Dr. Emmons (Works, vol. 5, Ser. 78) says—"Baptism is the appointed pre-requisite of admission to the visible church, under the gospel, just as circumcision was the appointed *pre-requisite of admission into the visible church under the law.*" That circumcision was thus the initiatory rite to all regular and approved visible church relations is, I believe, universally admitted, and will not I am sure, be denied by you. But being so, Abraham was admitted to *these* relations only, for the first, on the day of his circumcision. Up to that time, whatever his personal piety and communion with God, and whatever he might be by promise, he was not by covenant a member, much less the father, in regular and approved standing, of the visible church. In other terms, as we shall see, God gave him no welcome to regular and approved standing in the *visible* church, until he was thoroughly cured of his polygamy, though, as the subsequent history shows, he was not so cured, however he may have seemed to be, of his deception and falsehood. Of all this, however, I say nothing farther. Your argument is answered, when I show a real rebuke and discipline for the practice of both, and no leniency of treatment in favor of the practice of the social over that of the individual wrong. This therefore is all that I now attempt.

Begin we, then, our "study of God's method in this case." You ask, as if it were an end of argument, "if, in those days, there had been an organized church, distinct from the family, would it have been the duty of the minister, under the circumstances, to exclude Abraham and Jacob from its communion because they practised polygamy?"

I reply—If, in those days, there had been an organized church, distinct from the family, would it have been the duty of the minister, under the circumstances, to exclude Abraham and Jacob from its communion, because the one practised premeditated lying, and the other, extortion, fraud, and falsehood? And you may not say, yes, to this, on the ground that these were elsewhere expressly forbidden, while the other was not. For, as we have seen, it was not so in the latter Mosaic period; and if it were so then, what record or fragment of a record have you, that it was so in the patriarchal? Where is your specific precept, forbidding falsehood, fraud, and extortion, any more than polygamy, in patriarchal times? You have no more proof that these were expressly forbidden at that day, than that polygamy was; and to assume it, is to beg the whole question. Besides, if they were so prohibited then, and the patriarchs in doing them were guilty of plain, palpable, and disciplinable offences, it is for you to explain, how, with all these added to their polygamy, they were still unreprieved and “enjoying communion with God all the time!”

This, I am aware, is only silencing your argument. It is showing merely, that as your argument proves too much, it proves nothing, and may if one chooses, be summarily dismissed as having neither pertinency nor force. This, however, leaves the circumstances and facts of the case unexplained, and the difficulties respecting them unrelieved. Let us see if we can explain the one and relieve the other.

God, you allege, kept up his communion with the patriarchs, continued to smile upon and bless them, notwithstanding their practice of polygamy, and never, “so far as the record goes,” reprovied them for it, or

told them it was wrong, or forbade them to do it again. At the same time, these same patriarchs were guilty of the other sins named, and as I have shown, enjoyed the same communion, received the same blessing, and, on your principles of interpretation, were equally without reproof and instruction. Now, brother, my interpretation of the Bible record in these cases is the exact opposite of yours.

As I read that record, it is, from beginning to end, and equally in respect to all the sins named, but a record of instruction, reproof and discipline of the clearest and severest kind. And in respect to us and all beholders, it is God teaching by example, and therefore all the more explicitly and impressively, what he elsewhere teaches by precept ; or rather, it is God enforcing precept by example. In the language of the apostle concerning kindred visitations at a later period, (1. Cor. x. 11), "All these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written," not for our apology and excuse in similar cases, but "for our *admonition*, upon whom the ends of the world are come." They (v. 6) "were our examples," not of the harmlessness of such indulgences in such cases, but "to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." Such, at least, is my understanding of the record. And the Bible is a contradiction, and God a monster, if it be not the true understanding. And now, in proof, I remark :

1. Christ informs us, (Luke vi. 35), that it is a distinctive glory of "the Highest," that "he is *kind* unto the unthankful and the evil." That he was thus kind to the patriarchs, and did accordingly bestow great providential blessings on them, notwithstanding their sins, is no proof, therefore, that he never prohibited those sins,

and never censured their commission. This element in your argument then must be dropped.

2. You admit, in the case of Abraham's polygamy, that "the practical result was a sufficient and providential reproof for his conduct," but insist that this is only additional evidence that "the Bible often leaves such wrongs to practical and providential reproofs, and does not always call for direct denunciation in words." In other terms, you admit that God did reprove Abraham in deeds, but insist that this is evidence that he did not reprove him "in words;" nay, that "he never, so far as the record goes, reprov'd him for what he had done, or told him it was wrong, or forbade him to do it again." So then, when you see me chastising my son for a misdeed, that is no reproof, is it? It only shows, forsooth, that, "so far as the record goes," I do not reprove him for what he has done, nor tell him it is wrong, nor forbid him to do it again! Actions in such a case do not speak; or, if they do, so far from speaking louder than words, they only say to be sure, that the "indiscretion, to call it by no harsher name," is so trivial, and, "in the circumstances," so allowable, that words are neither given, nor even called for! I think my little boy would not interpret paternal discipline in that way. I suspect he would think the rod quite as significant a reproof as the word. And if, with all my daily intimacy with him, I never told him the thing was wrong and he must not do it, and then, without a word of explanation or reproof at the time, went to scourging him for it—if, in short, instead of disciplining on the principle of a word before a blow, I went upon that of a blow before a word and without a word, I imagine, he and every beholder would deem me, justly, a monster. And surely, I shall not readily ad-

mit an interpretation of the Bible, which represents God as disciplining his children on such principles, and makes him, therefore, such a monster. No. When you see me correcting my child, you know that it is the most significant of all reproofs—that actions, in such case, speak louder than words. You know equally, unless I am a monster, that such action is itself the highest proof that I have before told him, in terms or their equivalent, that the thing is wrong and he must not do it. So, in civil society, when you see one executed or bearing any penalty at the hands of government, you know that such infliction is the government's severest reproof of the offence; and you know equally, if the government be not a monster, that penalty inflicted is demonstration absolute of precept or prohibition previously promulgated. So is it, if he be not a monster, in God's government. His inflictions, whether by special or ordinary providence, and whether of the nature of judgment with mercy, as in the discipline of the patriarchs, or of "judgment without mercy," as in the overthrow of Sodom and the old world, are at once his severest reproofs, and the highest possible evidence of previous instruction and prohibition, *given in so many terms, or so written and uttered in the very constitution of things as to make terms needless, and "nature" herself a teacher, and the offenders without excuse, if, in the given case, they are not "a law unto themselves."* At all events, this is true, where God is in the habit of such frequent and intimate communication, as with the patriarchs; and Paul says it is so, (Rom. i. 32) even in respect to Pagans. The "providential reproof" then, which you admit God gave the patriarchs for their polygamy, was at once his severest rebuke of it, and the clearest evidence also, that he had prohibited it, in ex-

press terms or their equivalent, beforehand; and that it therefore, equally with the other patriarchal offences, was among the things expressly and directly forbidden. And being so, we have a perfect explanation of the fact, that the *manner* of the historic record is the same in respect to all—there being, “so far as the record goes,” no reproof, in kind or degree, of the one which does not exist in regard to the other, except perhaps, that the reproof for the polygamy is the more marked and obvious of the two. To suppose then, that at that time the polygamy was not prohibited, while the other offences were, is not only to beg the entire question, but to do it, in face of the most obvious analogies, in violation of the plainest principles of justice and of the divine government generally, and in rejection of the only supposition that consistently explains and harmonizes the record itself.

But 3. It is more—it is to overlook and disregard the great object for which, so far as our *duty* is concerned, the whole Bible is given, and the grand principle on which it is everywhere constructed. So far as concerns human duty, both to God and man, there are certain general principles or maxims, which, as I interpret God’s book, are common to the true religion in all ages of the world, and which it is the great object of the Bible, by precept and example, but mainly by example, to specify and enforce. One of them is, that “*godliness* is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life *that now is*, and of that which is to come”—in other terms, that, for the present no less than the coming life, godliness alone, in the long run, is the highest expediency and truest safety. Another of these principles is, that they only *are* godly, whatever their hopes and professions, who are ready every where and in re-

spect to everything, to "confess" Christ "*before men*"—that light which is under the bushel being no light, and that salt which gives forth no savor being fit only for the dunghill. Another is, that they only truly *confess* Christ, who openly and habitually *obey* him—they (2 Kings xvii. 33–44) that fear the Lord but *serve* their own gods being heathen still; and they that call Christ (Luke vi. 46) Lord! Lord! and *do* not the things which he says, being hypocrites or self-deceived; and they (Matt. vii. 20–23 and Mark viii. 38) that are "ashamed of him and of *his words*" (requirements; doctrines of duty no less than of faith and worship), in the presence of "adulterous and sinful" men, being destined, if they repent not, to a similar denial by him, in the presence of God and the holy angels. And another of these principles is, that in so confessing Christ, he only is safe, and his faith only implicit and blameless, who is ready, always and everywhere, to venture his all upon it—he (Mark viii. 35) that will save his life being sure to lose it, and he that will lose it, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, being sure to save it; and his faith only being "made perfect," which, like Abraham's in the offering of Isaac (James ii. 22), can trust Christ unflinching, at the risk and in the hour of even death itself.

Such, at all events, were the teachings of Christ when here in the flesh. And I take it for granted, that when Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day and saw it, and heard his summons to leave country and kindred and take up his cross and follow him, he saw the same Christ and heard the same gospel—the same, in all fundamental and distinctive duty, not less than of hope and worship. To suppose otherwise, is to say, that when Abraham saw Christ's day, whether as present or only

in prospect, he did not see it, but only the day of another Christ. It is to maintain, that when summoned to leave country and kindred, and go forth, and he went not knowing whither, his faith and the obedience that was to verify and perfect it, were not, in their distinctive and fundamental elements, at one with those of later discipleship, and that in classing them so, as in Heb. xi., and especially in holding Abraham up, as he often does, as the father of the believing, Paul is guilty of a great mistake, and urges the sheerest logical impertinence—Abraham's faith and Abraham's life in verification of it, not being, either in requirement or fact, a specimen at all of the daily life and social duties demanded by the gospel of apostolic and later times. It is, in a word, to allege that Abraham saw another Christ, and obeyed, in its requirements, another gospel than our own. For one, I can receive no such doctrine. As I read God's book, Abraham's Christ and Abraham's gospel no more allowed lying, fraud, extortion or polygamy than do our own. And when God summoned him from his idolatrous, polygamical and degenerate kindred, to roam among strangers still more so, it was not to save him from strong and overpowering temptation, but rather to show whether he would stand the trial, and by it purify and perfect his faith. It was, that in the continued and complete separation of himself in all these respects from the ungodly around him, he should then and there, among strangers and enemies no less than friends, "confess" Christ "*before men*;" and that to whatever trials *such* confession might subject him, he should never be "ashamed" of Christ, or of his "words" (requirements), in *that* "adulterous and sinful generation." It was that always, everywhere, and in all things, he should be an actual exem-

plar of the true religion in distinction from the false—"a living epistle, known and read of all," condemnatory alike of polygamy and all idolatrous customs and practices—just such a specimen of Christianity in duty not less than hope and worship, as you or I, going forth as a Christian Prince and Teacher, would be required to be, to-day, in the midst of similar surrounding ungodliness.

How this explains, harmonizes, and gives significance to the Abrahamic record and the whole Bible, how it makes God's Book worthy of its author, consistent with itself, and instructive to us, and how it answers your inquiry about excluding Abraham and Jacob from the Church, with some other matters, I must reserve to my next.

LETTER X.

GOD'S METHOD WITH THE EXCEPTIONS;

OR, ABRAHAM'S CASE CONSIDERED.

BROTHER STOWE:

I CLOSED my last with the position, that Abraham's Christ and Abraham's gospel, in fundamental and distinctive duty not less than hope and worship, were at one with ours; that practical Christianity, therefore, in respect to polygamy, no less than lying and kindred sins, was required to be the same in him as in us; consequently, that when it was not so, and God visited him with providential retribution for his polygamy as signally as for his deception, and even more so, it was at

once, the highest reproof of both and the strongest evidence that he had equally prohibited them, in express terms or their equivalent, beforehand ; and hence, that these delinquencies and their consequences are not put on record to show the harmlessness and allowableness of such practices in such circumstances, but are our "examples, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Now, without arguing this view directly farther, let us suppose, for a moment, that it is the true one ; and then, by interpreting the Bible in accordance with it, let us see if it do not give a harmony, explanation, and significance to the patriarchal record that no other does ; if also, it do not make that record and the Bible as a whole more honorable to God, consistent with itself, and instructive to us than any other ; and if, therefore, we have not, in this fact alone, the highest possible evidence of the truth of the view itself—the same evidence indeed, that we have of the scientific truth of the Copernican system of astronomy, viz., *that as a supposition, it best explains and reconciles the facts.*

ABRAHAM'S TRIAL, AND MODERN WISDOM.

And now, in accordance with this view, let us "study" the patriarchal record. Abraham is called, (Gen. xii. 1, &c.) He is to leave country, kindred and father's house. Heirship, inheritance, and permanent possession in that direction, are to be all given up. He is to roam abroad a pilgrim—a stranger among strangers. In the midst of surrounding idolaters and polygamists, he is to be a living exemplar of the true religion. As such, he is to be as distinct and separate from their abominations in the daily social life, as in the daily religious hope and worship. He is therefore to be a one-

wife man, as rigidly as a one-Savior and a one-God man. Wherever he goes, he is to be distinguished from those around, not more by the singleness of his object of hope and worship, than by the singleness of his object of conjugal affection and the general purity and uprightness of his life—the one being but the fruit, verification and perfection of the other. Now, were he and his wife in low and menial life, they might do all this without seeming to be particularly singular, and therefore, without attracting much if any attention, and with comparative and probable impunity—for, where polygamy prevails, the lower classes commonly have but one wife. Or, were Sarai, in her person and appearance, deformed and ugly, however elevated their position, no polygamical prince would be likely to covet her or to kill him to obtain her. The worst would probably be a wonder and a laugh at the singularity and strangeness of his taste. But, Sarai is beautiful. Her husband's very name, (Abram), is high-father, and her's, (Sarai), is my-princess. As prince and princess, then, they are to go forth among princes, as well as people, one husband and one wife, and she a beauty. They are to do this in presence of those, especially the princes, whose universal custom is that of many wives; whose respectability and standing are very much measured by the number they possess; who cannot therefore fail to be struck and reprov'd or scandalised by the new and singular example; and with whom, beauty, in such circumstances, will be sure to awaken lust and stimulate to violence, if necessary to gratification. Or, they are to do it, where if rank and power do not molest they may be impotent to protect, and the mere arrival of a stranger, as in Sodom, (Gen. xix. 4, 5), and, in the day of their degeneracy, in Benjamin (Judges xix.

22-26) may be the signal for a mob "both of old and young," or an onset of "Sons of Belial" intent, even unto death, on deeds of lust and shame. Truly these were peculiar circumstances and this a trying testimony. To go forth thus was literally to forsake father and mother, houses and lands, and take one's life in hand. And observe, the acknowledgment and worship of Jehovah as the true God were not the great point of difficulty. For where was Abraham ever in danger, or when driven from Egypt for these; and when was he ever tempted in Gerar to forbear and deny these? No. It was not as a true worshipper, but as a true obeyer, that he found his chief trial. The test that was too strong for even his sturdy faith was in the daily life. It was in obedience here, alone, that he saw death in prospect, and his faith failed.


And now, in such a case, to adopt a little modern wisdom, what great harm could there be in giving up for the time, the mere external relation of husband and wife and adopting that of brother and sister? Were they not brother and sister? And moreover, would God stickle for the mere external relation, so long as the internal affection and the mutual duty—the spirit and essence of the whole were still the same? Absurd! And then, what a plea in justification, "in the circumstances of the case!" Was not Abraham a good man? Had he not left all for Christ? Would Christ reprove and discipline his own friend for a mere external wrong, when he knew perfectly that his heart was right, and that he yielded to the external wrong only from the direst necessity and with the best intentions, and most benevolent motives? True, his life was of some value in itself, but vastly more in its consequences, and was he not to consider these? Was not he the depository

of God's promises—the divinely selected father of the promised seed? Did he not hold in trust the great interests and future glory of Zion? Was not Egypt a part of that world to which he was to carry the true religion? Nay, was it not in him that all the families of the earth were to be blessed? Not to mention himself then, would not the “most disastrous consequences” ensue, to the church and the world, were he now to die? Was he then to throw away his life, and peril such interests, and invoke such consequences, under the silly idea that God was an unbending and fanatical stickler for the mere external forms of things? Who would “stand that nonsense?” Ah, brother, the plea of yourself and the Board about the fidelity of the missionaries, and the piety of the slaveholders in the mission churches, and the “disastrous consequences” that would come on attempting a true obedience, is nothing to it. You do not begin to make out a case equal to Abram's. But how did God treat this plea, or any other that Abram may have made, then? What did God teach him, and in him all coming ages, as to this business of confessing Christ, in the social relations and daily life, as well as worship, “*before men?*” We will “study” and see.

ABRAM'S SIN AND REPROOF IN EGYPT.

Abram comes to Canaan. To strengthen and guard him against the peculiar temptation, God tells him surely (Gen. xii. 2, 3–7) that he will make of him a great nation, and will protect and bless him, and will give that land to his “seed.” Here, for aught that appears, he maintains his integrity. But famine comes, and he goes to Egypt; and now, with famine behind, and polygamical ungodliness before, and beauty at his

side, the temptation bears down upon him in all its strength. It is too much. The external relation of husband and wife is dropped for that of brother and sister, and the technical truth, though real lie, is told—not wantonly, not needlessly, but to save life—to preserve him (Heb. xi. 17) “that had received the promises,” and avert the “most disastrous consequences!” Life, for the time, and the individual, was saved, and he was even “entreated well” in consequence; and yet, in its present enjoyment, and still more in its true and highest value and future glory, it was all lost—but for God’s interposition, lost forever. In present enjoyment, it was no more. But for God’s help (and how can he now anticipate that), the wife of his affection, and joy of his life, and her virtue are gone forever. To such a one, bereaved by his own misconduct, and borne down with his own reproaches, what now are sheep and oxen and servants and asses and camels, and even life itself? And then, but for God’s help again, what a dashing of all hopes for the future? Whence now the promised seed and the subsequent enlargement and glory, save as God gives back the lost wife or another in her stead? And at such a time and after such denial, what ground of hope that he will do it? Ah, brother, severe indeed was God’s reproof; and bitter, bitter the experience by which he that thought to save his life was made to know that he had only lost it. Nor was this the end. God, in mercy, helps, but rebukes and scourges still. To expose the deception, restore the wife, and at the same time keep incensed power from inflicting personal harm, God’s “plagues” are on Pharaoh and his house. They do their work. The deception is out. The husband and the wife are their own again. No personal violence for the imposition is dared. But they are summoned to the monarch’s presence. And now see



their shame, reproof, and banishment. "What is this," (Gen. xii. 18-20), sternly demands the insulted monarch—"What is this, that thou hast done unto me?" High-father and My-Princess!—"why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?" Teacher and exemplar of the true religion! "Why saidst thou, she is my sister," so I might have taken her to me to wife? Now, therefore, behold thy wife"—look upon thy fear and shame, and; now that she is yours again, (for such is the form and spirit of the original), "Take her and begone." "And Pharaoh commanded his men, concerning him; and they sent him away, and *his wife, and all that he had*"—and the word "sent" in this case is the same that is used in Gen. iii. 23 in the sense of "drove," and the same that in 1 Kings ix. 7, is rendered "cast out," and in other places "put out." Yes, he was delivered, but in what abasement. High-father, called, by the living God to go forth a princely teacher and exemplar of the true faith and life, he stands himself a culprit, exposed, rebuked, shamed and driven in disgrace from the presence and the realm of a polygamical idolater. A wholesome lesson truly, and having quite as much to do with the question of polygamy as that of lying.

ABRAM'S SIN AND REPROOF IN CANAAN.

And now Abram dwells again in Canaan. (Gen. xiii.) God blesses him. He and Lot separate. God renews the promise to give the land to his seed. Several years elapse and yet there is no fulfilment. And now, Abram despondingly asks (Gen. xv. 2, 3), "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" Again, more explicitly than ever, the promise is renewed (v. 4)—"he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." And (v. 6),

Abram "believed." And then (v. 8-18), as a pledge of fulfilment, to strengthen and confirm his faith, God accepted his sacrifice, opened the future to him in a vision, and "in that same day made a covenant" with him, saying "Unto thy seed have I given this land." And yet no son appears. "Ten years" (Gen. xvi. 3) has Abram dwelt in Canaan, and old age is hard upon himself and wife, and still there is no fulfilment of the oft-repeated promise. Is it to be always so? Can no way of relief be found? "And Sarai said (v. 2), Behold now the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened." The deed is done. . And now, reproof and retribution come. At once there is a family quarrel. Domestic peace is dead, and God withdrawn—holding no communion now, save with the injured though sinning servant. Sarai, who had solicited the deed, is "despised." Abram, who had consented, is reproached by his own wife, and summoned (v. 5), as God shall judge between them, to redress the wrong for which he, equally with her, is responsible. Hagar, the more innocent of the three, is afflicted and abused (v. 6-13), but though reprov'd, finds help in God. At length the fruit of the iniquity appears—"Abram was four score and six years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. And then *for thirteen long years God hid his face*. Not a word passed between him and the patriarch. For aught that appears, and as the subsequent history would seem to show, like the incestuous one at Corinth (1 Cor. v. 5) he is "delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The discipline did its work, and then the day of the Lord came. "And

(Gen. xvii. 1) when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared." And what a salutation. How terrible its reminiscence and reproof of the past. "I *am* the *Almighty* God"—needing no human devices, much less polygamical iniquities to enable me to fulfil my promises. "Walk before (obey) *me* and be thou *perfect* (blameless), and," notwithstanding the sin and doubt of the past, "I *will* make my covenant between me and thee, and," marvellous though it seem, "*will* multiply thee exceedingly." In fit expression of his penitence and conscious guilt as well as reverence, "Abram fell on his face;" and then, as friend with friend, "God talked with him;" and again, more fully than ever, renewed his promises, and made them sure by covenant and seal.

ABRAHAM'S SIN FORSAKEN, AND GOD'S PROMISE FULFILLED.

But what means that "blameless" walk, or as the original is so often elsewhere rendered, that walk "up-right," and "without blemish," thus solemnly announced as the condition of the promise? Has it no reference to the past? Calls it for no separation from it? Rather, calls it not for a separation, absolute, entire, and final? And demands it not a covenant to that effect, with its pertinently significant symbol, then made and subsequently kept, as the only condition of a present renewal and a future fulfilment of the divine promise? And why *that* symbol? As a *visible* sign, a thousand things had answered better than circumcision? As a sign of *purification* merely, baptism and a score of other rites had served as well. Whence then the special pertinency of *circumcision*, and its enforcement by the fearful penalty that every soul which bears it not, "shall be cut

off from his people"—classed and counted, by God as well as men, a Gentile—"an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world?" As we have seen in our examination of Leviticus xviii., whoever practised such polygamy as Jacob's, or any of the other Gentile "abominations" there named, was to bear the same penalty—"the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people"—and Abraham's concubinage will hardly stand where Jacob's marriage is proscribed. What, then, are that symbol and the covenant it seals, but a memento and reproof of the past never to be forgotten, and a mark and pledge, thenceforth, of separation absolutely from polygamy and all kindred Gentile abominations? What are they, but God's assurance, on the one hand, *cut into the flesh of every Jew*, and to be borne down to Messiah's day, that he, the *great* promised seed, shall never come in that direction; and what, but their covenant, on the other, *sealed with their own blood*, that, as they long for His day and will rejoice to see it, they will keep themselves forever separate from all such indulgence, and will never seek offspring, and so Messiah's self, except *through the institution and in the way alone of God's appointment*? In a word, what is this whole proceeding, but God saying in so many terms, Be humbled now, forsake the past, swear you will never repeat it, seal your oath with your blood, keep it without blemish, and you shall have the promise and its fulfilment; and what, but Abraham falling on his face, confessing and forsaking his sin, rising up forgiven, seeing Christ's day (v. 17) and being glad, saying, in the gush of a full heart, I swear, and sealing his oath, straitway, with his blood?—"In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son, and

all the men of his house"—an end of polygamy and its associated sins there—a "putting off (Col. ii. 11) of the body of the sins of the flesh," by a circumcision made with hands, as the symbol and type of the spiritual putting off of the same, in Christ, by a "circumcision made without hands." And call you this no reproof, never telling Abraham he is wrong, or forbidding him to do so again?

I need not carry out the history, in detail, farther. Briefly, then, I add—Abraham accepts the discipline and reproof; is cured of his sin; comes with his household, for the first, into regular and approved visible church relations; and *now has power with God in prayer*. The cities of the plain cannot be destroyed without his knowledge; and if but ten righteous be there, his prayer avails to save them, all fetid, as they are, with this same iniquity, and ripe for doom. And yet his faith is not "made perfect." It must have other trials still. True, he is cured of seeking the promised seed in forbidden ways—*ἐκ πορνείας*, of "fornication," or Gentile concubinage; for in this sense the word is clearly used, as well as in that of general harlotry. (See John viii. 41, and the general use of the term in such passages as Acts xv. 20–29; 1 Cor. vi. 13–18; vii. 2; Gal. v. 19; Ephes. v. 3; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 3–5; and the Septuagint of Judges xi. 1; 1 Kings iii. 16; &c.) He has found, by sad experience, that to do so is to walk "as the Gentiles, which know not God;" and he will not do that again. He will seek no wife but Sarah, and no heir but by her. But is he ready to confess Christ in this thing, *before men*?" Where he is, there is no difficulty. But can he do it among strangers, and with no protection but his God? Can he stand up in the presence of prevailing and princely polygamy, and confess and honor Sarah as his only wife, where (Gen. xx. 11); he is sure "the

fear of God is not?" Dare he be known there, as the husband of one wife, and she honored as his other self, not less than as the believer in one Savior, and the worshipper of one God alone? Alas (Gen. xx.), the trial is too great. Again he falls, and is again reprov'd and put to shame. But God is gracious. It is enough. He makes a frank confession (vs. 11-13) of his weakness and wrong in the deception. He owns and honors the sister as the wife. And now, himself the real and confessed husband of one wife, and each the owned and honored of the other, and both ready to trust God's marriage institution and abide his time for offspring,—now, for the first, the promised seed is given—"the Lord, (Gen. xxi. 1), visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken"—the promise realized, as soon as the trust was given and the obedience rendered, *and not before*. O what a lesson. How full of warning, yet of hope and comfort. What an illustration of God's holiness and mingled mercy. What an "admonition" to the American Board and its missionaries, as well as us, of the discipline that must be theirs, for their compromises with the idolatries of the Eastern churches, the castes of India and the slavery and oppressions of all lands, before, in the great work of the world's conversion, either they or we shall behold the true realization of God's promises or of our hopes and prayers. Ah, brother, we are hardly yet up to the faith that took Abram out of Haran. A long and bitter discipline lies between us and the fulness of our faith and God's fulfilment. And yet, as God is true and we are his, we shall see them both.

THE BIBLE CONSISTENT AND WORTHY OF GOD.

And now tell me, if this be not the true harmony, ex-

planation and meaning of this record—if there be any other that makes it and the whole Bible so honorable to God, so consistent with itself, so instructive to us? Why, in this view the whole Bible history becomes instinct with instruction. It is God, in thousand forms, teaching by example; nay, rather, the Word, Christ, himself in action. Job's history is integrity that never falters; that will not deny or distrust its Lord in the darkest hour; that knows that his Redeemer liveth, and it shall yet see him in the flesh; that does see him, and its latter end is blessed more than its beginning; and concerning which later inspiration bids us mark "the end of the Lord," and thence learn *integrity and hope forever*. And on the other hand, patriarchal and other delinquencies, with their results, are equally our "ensamples," showing the "end of the Lord" with them, and so illustrating and enforcing subsequent, contemporaneous, or previous prohibitions. Abraham's and Jacob's polygamy, with its vexations and other consequences, is at once the commentary and enforcement both of the seventh commandment and of the specific statute (Lev. xviii. 18) "Neither shalt thou take one wife to another, to vex her." Jacob's extortion of the birthright from a fainting brother, with the mischiefs that ensued and the perpetual defeat of all his own wishes in the settlement of its succession, is equally a commentary and enforcement of the tenth commandment, and of the specific statute in Leviticus xxv. 35–37—"If thy brother be waxen poor, and his hand faileth, (see margin) then thou shalt relieve him," &c. The falsehood, whoredom, incest and exposure of Judah, with the previous conduct and death of his sons, expound and enforce the other statute requiring the younger brother to raise up seed, and so perpetuate the birthright to his deceased elder. The

lies of Jacob's sons and others explain themselves. Their sale of Joseph as a slave and its results, show God's interpretation of the eighth commandment—"indeed (Gen. xl. 15) I was *stolen* away out of the land," and give, as in the deliverance from Egypt also, his ideas of slavery. In a word, the whole Bible is no longer what Rabbism and the Papacy first made it, and what German Rationalism and your own system of interpreting have so extensively continued it, the *Magna Charta for the sale and the practice of human indulgences*, but the living Word, in record, of the living God; written, in these self-same histories, not as you interpret, to show the allowableness of such things in such circumstances, but "for our admonition;" in past discipline, as in present exaltation (Heb. iv. 12), "living and powerful, a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," showing that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom," no less than they, "*we* have to do," and thereby proving (1 Tim. iii. 16-17), that "all Scripture is given by inspiration, and is *profitable*" not for apology and allowance of iniquity, but "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in *righteousness*, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto *all good works*."

THE INQUIRY ANSWERED.

To your inquiry then, touching the exclusion of Abraham and Jacob from the Church for their polygamy, I answer—what God did when the Church was the same with the family or the State, and that only, would exclude from the one which cut off from the other, can be no rule for us now that the Church is separate from both, and so far as full communion is concerned, is to be made up, not of regenerate and unregenerate alike, but

of those only (Rom. ii. 29) whose "circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit," and whose covenant, as regenerate, is written by God himself (Jer. xxxi. 31-34 and Heb. viii. 8-12) "in their mind and in their hearts." With this difference, however, I answer further: If in those days there had been an organized Church distinct from the family, it would have been the duty of the minister, under the circumstances, to deal with Abraham and Jacob for their polygamy just as God did. As the one was not, previous to his sin, a regular member of the visible Church, it would have been his duty to instruct, admonish, and hold him in suspense in the way of doubt and trial, and even for a time reject him altogether, until the instruction and discipline had made it clear that he was thoroughly divorced from his sin, and then, and not till then, to welcome him to regular and approved standing in the visible Church. And as the other was a member of the visible Church, a Jew outwardly if not inwardly, when he committed his sin, it would have been the minister's duty to deal with him for it just as for his extortion, fraud and falsehood, as God did; and so doing, to give instruction on instruction, reproof on reproof, and discipline on discipline, until he also was cured of his sin or made an affecting and impressive "admonition" to all that should come after.

GOD'S METHOD ENTIRE.

Behold then "God's method," in exception *and* rule. How unlike the method of yourself and the American Board. According to it, and contrary to yours, what you call Blood-revenge is but the true and faithful administration of the highest executive trust ever committed by God to man; polygamy and concubinage, so far from having a legal allowance, are among

the Gentile abominations that subject patriarchal faith to its severest disciplines, invoke God's excising judgments, and make even the insensate earth sick to vomiting of her inhabitants; and governmental wrongs, whether of war or oppression, the nearest akin to kidnapping and slavery, so far from having special forbearance, are only damned and doomed, with all God's wonders, even in heathen States. Where then is your argument for slavery in Christ's Church from these sources? As God is true and righteous, and his book is not a contradiction and license of iniquity, nor his Church a place to sell and sanctify indulgences, it is gone. It is not in the glorious Word of life. And, to return your own terms to yourself, they who find it there and act accordingly, "*have not learned their method of procedure from the Bible.*"

LETTER XI.

THE POSITION OF PROF. STOWE AND THE AMERICAN BOARD INCONSISTENT AND UNSCRIPTURAL.

BROTHER STOWE :

WE have now reached the direct question of the Bible treatment of slavery. As we have seen, you have no presumption for your position, from God's treatment of the other social wrongs classed by you with it. The argument of analogy from God's treatment of these is thoroughly against you. The direct argument, in its detail, as you did not yourself go into it, I must reserve for my reply to Dr. Beecher. At the same time, it is due

to you and all concerned, to say some things here in respect to the general position itself, both as it regards slavery and the other social wrongs, associated by you and the Board with it, and placed on the same general ground of treatment.

As I have before stated, the position of the Board and yourself is, that slaveholding is not of itself, in the same sense as falsehood, drunkenness and the like, a barrier to a regular and approved standing in the Church; that, as with polygamy, caste and other social wrongs, they who practise it, provided their evidence of piety be in other respects satisfactory, are to be welcomed to such standing in the Church; and that "under such influences" as are found in the Church rather than otherwise, it is to be expected that the master will "be *prepared* to break the bonds of the slave, and the oppressive ruler *led* to dispense justice to the subject, and the proud Brahmin fraternally to embrace the man of low caste." And accordingly, from an official statement of the Prudential Committee, accompanying the Report of the Board, it appears that men of different castes in India, continuing their caste, and oppressive rulers at the Sandwich Islands, continuing their oppressions, as well as slaveholders among the Indians, continuing their slavery, have been welcomed to, and are still members, in good standing, of mission Churches; and the Committee declare, in terms, that such things "*can, among the heathen at least, be best corrected in the Church.*"

So far as this general position relates to the subject of slavery, in the letter accompanying your published speech, you think it "incumbent on the opponents of the report to give precise and definite answers to the following three questions:"—

"1. Does the Bible deal with slaveholders in all

circumstances, just as it deals with idolaters and thieves and wilful murderers?

“2. Is there any other scriptural or proper condition of Church fellowship than this; satisfactory evidence of real piety and acceptance with Christ?

“3. Do not slaveholders in any circumstances ever give this satisfactory evidence?”

I will try to be explicit. To the first question then, I answer Yes; and so far as the argument from the analogy of God's treatment of the other social wrongs is concerned, I think I have proved it. But, for the argument's sake, I will yield you this, and answer No. And now, will you tell me whether the Bible does not deal with slaveholding as severely and explicitly as with dancing, theatre-going, gaming and the like? Is not slaveholding equally with these, something “in the principles of practice” of a man, to quote your own Presbyterian Book of Discipline (B. ii. sect. 3), “which, if not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin or mar their spiritual edification?” And on this ground, if not the other, is it not a disciplinable offence in Christ's house, and your position therefore utterly wrong? Your first question then, you observe, does not cover the case.

To your second inquiry I say, the answer depends wholly upon what you mean by “satisfactory evidence.” To the question as it now stands, I answer, unhesitatingly, Yes. “Satisfactory evidence of real piety and acceptance” *merely*, so far from being the only, is not even a “scriptural and proper condition of Church fellowship”—meaning by this full and approved communion in the visible Church. That which alone is such condition, is satisfactory evidence of real piety and acceptance, *walking orderly*, with Christ. Like Abra-

ham's, it must be the piety of a "*blameless*" *walk*, before it has any claim to a regular and approved standing in the visible Church. So long as it be otherwise, be it ever so real, we have nothing else to do than to "admonish" and "note" it, and if need be "have no company" with it, that it "may be ashamed." Your second question then, you observe, is not "precise and definite."

To your third I answer: Many slaveholders in many circumstances may give satisfactory evidence of real piety and acceptance. But that is nothing to the purpose. The true form of the question should be this—Do slaveholders, persisting in their slaveholding, in *the* circumstances of instruction and admonition to the contrary, give satisfactory evidence of real piety and acceptance, *walking orderly*, with Christ? And to this I say, No. And if you retort some extreme case as an exception, my answer is, first, that the exception proves the rule; and second, that the case is yet to be found. Messrs. Birney, Brisbane and others, whose hearts were really in it, have found no difficulty in detaching themselves from the system, and securing freedom to their bondmen. And in the face of such facts, until you can find a wiser and better man than Abraham, and can show in the path of duty, greater sacrifices of houses, lands and kindred behind, with more frightful exile and dangers among strangers before, tell me not of the good slaveholder who cannot manumit his slaves, and holds them only for their good, and in all this walks orderly with Christ!

When I see him I will believe. Meanwhile, not only is your question not to the point, but I quite agree with the Prudential Committee in their Historical Statement, that "examining and deciding hypothetical cases before-hand," and *such* cases, should be "always avoid-

ed," and that "any other course than this" is "undignified and unbecoming," and must "not only cause perplexity and disagreement among the friends of missions, but before the lapse of many years, would undoubtedly and justly cause to be withdrawn from the Board the confidence and respect of all its real friends."

It is easy now to detect and expose the error of yourself and the Board in the late proceedings at Brooklyn. Starting with a right principle, if properly understood and applied, you and they have made interpretations and applications in the present case, which neither you, nor they, nor the Churches will for a moment allow in other cases.

1. You so construe the general principle, that we are to receive whom Christ receives, as to make no distinction between receiving *as* he does, and receiving to regular and approved standing in the visible Church. Now I maintain, and so do the Churches, and you and the Board, in other cases, that there is a wide difference between the two; that by virtue of this difference, though in a given case we may charitably believe the individual a real Christian, yet if he be walking disorderly, we are not to welcome him to regular and approved standing in the visible Church, but as Christ does, to the instructions and admonitions suited to his case; and that if he profit thereby and forsake his disorderly walk, he is then to stand in approved and full communion; while if he do not, he thereby throws such discredit on the general evidence of his piety as justly to exclude him. And this I hold to be the rule touching the slaveholder.

2. You and the Board put a meaning on the terms "credible" and "satisfactory" in this case, which neither you, nor they, nor the Churches allow in other cases, and which no proper and scriptural use of the

terms will admit. Mere *possible evidence*—that on which, by a large charity, we may possibly regard one as a Christian, is not “credible” or “satisfactory,” in any scriptural use of the terms, or any general practice of the Churches. No more is mere *real evidence*—that by which we are, on the whole, satisfied of the reality of one’s piety and acceptance. If it be, what means it that in a large portion of the Churches represented by the Board, dancing is a disciplinable offense? Can no man who does this give evidence that shall on the whole satisfy you that he is still a real Christian? What means it, that so extensively the want of what you and I regard as a correct faith in respect to infant baptism, constitutes a barrier to the fold? Can no such individual give evidence that shall satisfy you, and ought to satisfy all, of the reality of his piety and acceptance with Christ? What means it too, that they who clamor loudest, in some cases, for the welcome of the slaveholder, are among the first to exclude from the Church and depose from the ministry, men of Oberlin views, admitting at the same moment that the evidence of their piety is clear and undoubted? Are the Churches, in these and similar cases, continually denying their own cardinal principle of welcoming all who give credible or satisfactory evidence of piety? In some of them they doubtless are. In all of them they are, if the terms “credible and satisfactory,” in their true and scriptural use, have no higher meaning than that put upon them by you and the Board in the present case. But they have a higher meaning. They suppose and include always, as the chief ground of credibility and satisfaction, the element of a *blameless walk*.

And this in fact is the ecclesiastical meaning, according to the received Congregational and Presbyterian

standards. Your own Book of Discipline is very explicit. "An offence," it says (Chap. i. Sec. 3), "*is anything in the principles or practice of a Church member, which is contrary to the word of God, or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification.*" And I beg to know if the practice of caste, polygamy, slaveholding and the like, in the face of instruction to the contrary, are neither "contrary to the word of God," nor fitted to "tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification." And surely you will not welcome to the Church those who are only fit subjects of its discipline the moment they are in it. But whether this be the ecclesiastical meaning or not, it is the only scriptural. No man has, by the Bible, any right in any Church, on evidence that is not at once real and creditable—credible to him, creditable to the Church, creditable to Christ. Be his evidence of piety in other respects what it may, if he walk disorderly, either in doctrine or life, he brings discredit on that evidence, and he has no right to walk into the Church, or stay there unrebuked and undisciplined, and throw his discredit upon it, and cover "The Pillar and Ground of the Truth" with his reproach. And this is as true of slaveholding, polygamy, caste and oppression, as of dancing, theatre-going, gaming, or a score of similar things, to say nothing of drunkenness, theft, falsehood and the like.

True, in thus holding and exercising "The Power of the Keys," the Church, as "The Pillar and Ground of the Truth," is to judge righteous judgment. She may not set that down as disorderly, either in doctrine or life, which is not so, according to the mind of Christ. If she do, she must answer it to him. And equally must she answer it, if she allows as orderly, what He

condemns. And now, will you maintain, in face of the spirit, the precepts, and the principles of the gospel of Christ, and in face of the increasing light of eighteen centuries, and the general condemnation of all unimplicated Christendom, that slaveholding, polygamy, caste and oppression, persisted in after instruction to the contrary, are not disorderly walking, discreditable to the individual, dishonorable to Christ, a deep and damning reproach, when welcomed to its bosom, to "The Pillar and Ground of the Truth;" that they are not so much so even as gaming, theatre-going or dancing? What! shall Mr. Kirk's character and standing in the Church and ministry be put in doubt, and seriously endangered, by the mere rumor, silly and unfounded, that he now and then went to the theatre in Paris; and it be no disorderly walking, and no discredit to one's evidence of piety, and no bar to one's regular and approved standing in the Church, that in the face of instruction to the contrary, he continues the heathen abominations named; or, that in the face of Bible truth, and the light of eighteen centuries, and the voice of all impartial Christendom, he holds, and will hold, his own living and God-ransomed brothers in bondage? Away with this false charity for the doers of heathen abominations and the plunderers of men, pious though they be—this turning of the grace of God and the liberty of Christ into the licentiousness of heathenism and the despotism of violence and power—this prostituting of "The Pillar and Ground of the Truth" to the service, shield, and sanction of uncleanness, pride, oppression and slavery.

Behold then the secret of the late grand error of yourself and the Board. In your overweening charity for the slaveholder, you lost sight, for the time, not only of the enormity of his sin, but equally of the distinctive end and

high glory of the Church, as "The Pillar and Ground of the Truth." Be it, that the slaveholder or other offender is a real Christian, then is he our brother, and we are to receive him as a brother. But, as I have shown, he is a brother walking disorderly. Then are we to receive him *as* a brother walking disorderly, and as such to "*admonish*" him. If he profit by the admonition and forsake his sin, he stands approved before God and man. If he do not, then be he in the Church or out of it, and be his evidence of piety in other respects what it may, the mandate of heaven (2 Thess. iii. 6), "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," is, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." Real brother though he be, we are to "note" him, and "have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Such is the law of Christ's house—such its distinctive end and glory; not to gather into a huge, ugly, misshapen, festering mass, all the possible or even real followers of Christ, however disorderly their walk, and however overlaid with the wood, hay and stubble of unbelief and sin; but to rear a temple to the Lord of living stones—a living temple of "approved and faithful men." And a sad day will it be for Zion, when, in accommodation to the imbecility and sin of heathenized and slaveholding piety, this law is practically repealed, and the Church denuded of her high prerogative, work and glory, as "The Pillar and Ground of the Truth."

And now, deny not that you and the Board do advocate the welcome to the Church of *actual oppressors*, as well as slaveholders, polygamists and the proud retainers of heathen caste. I know you said, emphatically, "no oppressor, without repenting of his oppression, can give credible evidence of piety." But that was only one of your happy inconsistencies. For, in the same breath,

you were urging the adoption of the report, in which the admission of oppressors, remaining such, to the Church, was directly and seriously advocated, on the ground that *in* the Church, better than out of it, "the oppressive ruler" could be "*led* to dispense justice to his subjects." And, as the practical commentary of this, you knew, at that moment, what the Prudential Committee have since stated, that there were not a few oppressors in the Sandwich Island Churches. You knew equally that they had been welcomed to those Churches, with no evidence whatever of repentance for their oppression; and that they now live in them, with no better evidence than that of somewhat mitigated, but still severe and ruinous extortions, rigorously exacted—in a word, that they were and still are, in the fullest sense, *extortioners*. Notwithstanding your happy inconsistency then, the real position of yourself and the Board is, that so that the individual be a ruler, and his other evidence of piety satisfactory, extortioner though he be, he is to come into the Church, not after he has repented, and forsaken his extortions, but that he may there be "*led*" to do it. Do not then disguise your real position to yourself or others. Tell the Churches plainly that this is not a question of slavery merely; that it touches equally all kindred social wrongs; and therefore, that the world over, wherever the forms of civil law enter into the case, and the other evidence of piety is what it should be, slaveholders, extortioners, polygamists, and the proud retainers of heathen caste are to be alike welcomed as approved and regular members of the fold of Christ. Tell them that in the various mission Churches all this has been actually done, and that you and the Board now defend and advocate it. Yes, say it all, and say it plainly; for all this your position is.

Behold it then in its bold and broad deformity ; and blench not to look its frightfulness fairly in the face.

And plead not in palliation, Moses' allowing various things for the hardness of men's hearts. Christ has told us plainly that this was very well for the State, but is to have no place in the ordering and administering of his Church. Speak not either of those times of ignorance that God winked at—that everywhere half-quoted and perverted text. Inspiration never uttered that in reference to a people enjoying the direct revelations of God, or to whom the Gospel had previously come. It was said with reference only to benighted Gentiles, (Acts xvii. 23–30), who, in the way of direct revelation, had never before heard of the true God or the gospel of his Son. And to them it was spoken, with as much reference to their idolatries as their other abominations, yea, with special reference to them, and is therefore a better warrant, far, for welcoming converts to mission Churches retaining their idolatries, than retaining their other heathen customs. But it is a warrant for neither. So far from it, that which is so often quoted as if it were, is given forth as the very occasion, for demanding an instant abandonment of the whole. “The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now,” in the proclamation of the Gospel, “commandeth all men, everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the *world* in *righteousness*, by that man whom he hath ordained.” That then, which, by a mutilated quotation and perversion, is so often made the warrant for continued allowance and partial reformation, is nothing else than a summons to instant and entire abandonment, and this as they fear the terrors of a coming righteous judgment. O how different from modern methods. When shall we have done with mutilations

and perversions of God's blessed book, that had their origin with Rabbinism, or the Papacy, or their father—when shall we be indeed a true succession of the apostles ?

LETTER XII.

THE POSITION OF PROF. STOWE AND THE AM. BOARD PAPAL AND RUINOUS.


BROTHER STOWE :

WE have seen that the position of yourself and the Board in respect to slavery, and other social wrongs, is in direct opposition to God's method, both in the general rule and the exception, and in palpable violation of the true scriptural grounds of membership and discipline in the visible Church. Let us now see, if, in character and consequence, it be not thoroughly papal and ruinous.

With no little confidence, you say, in respect to the opposite position, "No missions from the beginning of the world to the present time have ever been conducted on such a principle, and to require its adoption by this Board is to require a thing altogether unprecedented." You say this, to be sure, with immediate reference to slaveholding ; but as your speech and the Board's report place it on the same ground with the other sins named, the remark must be understood as covering the general position, in its application to them as well as it.

Now, brother, all this is easier said than proved. So far as concerns the other sins named, I think I have shown that Abraham's mission and the Mosaic too, in its original purity, were wholly on the opposite princi-


ple ; and, in respect to the latter, that any departure from that principle was, in law, excision from God's people. Nor do I doubt, that the whole apostolic mission, previous to its degeneracy, was on the same principle. When Paul told the Athenian idolaters that God had winked at the times of past ignorance, but now commanded them and all men to repent, I do not think he told them to take their own time for it, and to leave off more or less of their idolatries as might suit their inclination or convenience. And when he wrote to the Ephesians, (chapter iv. and v.) "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk," I do not think he meant only that they should not worship as other Gentiles worship. So far from it, in the express explanation of what he meant, they are to "put off, concerning the former conversation (conduct), the old man," and to "put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness ;" and more specifically still, in explanation of the old and new man, so far as respects the "conversation" (conduct), they are to put off lying, anger, theft, corrupt communication, &c., &c. In all things, but especially in respect to these, they are to be "followers of God, as dear children ;" and as to "fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness," they are not to be "once named" among them, "as becometh saints ; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient" (decent) ; and this, because they very well know that no such person "hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Nor may any man "deceive" them "with vain words" in this matter ; "for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience." They therefore may not be *partakers* with them." For they are "now light



in the Lord ; and are to “ walk as children of light * * in all goodness and righteousness, and truth, proving (trying) what is acceptable to the Lord ;” and are therefore to “ have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” And I do not believe, that in the face of such instructions, everywhere given and continually repeated, the converts of apostolic missionaries were allowed (see also James ii. and v., and 1 Cor. iv. 11), to hold on to their former polygamy, concubinage, caste, oppression and slavery, except so far as their own inclination and convenience in connexion with apostolic coaxing may have led them to do otherwise. No. Apostolic missionaries spoke with authority in this case. We “ say therefore and testify,” said they, “ *in the Lord*, that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk.” And in specifying the details of that walk, they never proscribed its foolish talking and indecent jesting, and allowed its foolish and indecent deeds. Rather, in the broad generics of fornication, all uncleanness, covetousness, respect of persons, and extortion, they proscribed all the specific forms of these, just as in that of idolatry they proscribed every form of that, and said to all their converts, let no form of either be once “ named among you, as becometh saints.” Nor was it the spirit merely that they aimed at, while the forms and deeds remained the same. They were here, as in all things, to “ avoid the appearance of evil ;” and of the vain philosophy that taught otherwise, and pleaded for practical continuance, they were plainly told, “ Let no man deceive you with vain words.” The truth is, apostolic missionaries measured men’s hearts, as Christ told them to, by their lives. They allowed no man to think himself better in spirit than he was in conduct. They eschewed the piety that called Christ Lord, Lord, but in

works denied him. And they would have spurned the idea, that a piety holding on to the forms and deeds of heathen impurity, pride and oppression, was after God in righteousness and true holiness ; or its walk, following God as dear children, proving what is acceptable to the Lord, and having no fellowship with the works of darkness ; nor would they have given any credit to such a faith as being anything better than dead. In a word, the apostolic mission separated its converts as thoroughly, in spirit, practice *and* form, from the works of heathenism as from its worship ; and it is only degeneracy that has ever sought to propagate the Gospel on any other principle. The fact you so confidently assume and assert is then as confidently questioned and denied.

According to the position of yourself and the Board, and the practice of the missionaries under it, it is the scriptural, right and best way to cure the practice of these various abominations, to welcome them, in the persons of supposed converts, to the visible Church, rather than make them a ground of remonstrance and exclusion. In support of this, I admit, that modern precedent is mostly with you, and nowhere more fully than in the Papacy. In truth, the great apostacy crept in, and swept over the Church, and brought its ages of night and death upon the world, on just this principle. You surely do not need the proof of this. You know well that volumes of it are at hand, if necessary—that everywhere the distinctive feature of the Papacy is, not to disturb the external forms and relations of such things as those in question, but to take them with supposed converts to the Church, not as desirable or commendable in themselves, but only rather than make them a ground of exclusion. You know too that in the application of the principle to forms and relations of worship, as well as of



the daily life, the instances are many in which heathen temples and heathen worshippers have been changed to Christian, by a simple change of the so-called object and spirit of worship, leaving the exterior forms and arrangements substantially the same. You may say this is a perversion of the principle! I say it is but its logical, consistent and full development; and has as much warrant, in reason and in the Bible, for its application to the forms and relations of heathen worship, as to those of heathen works. At all events, the principle, in kind, is eminently papal.

And now, you do not need the proof from ages past, that action on this principle has always been as eminently ruinous; that its history has ever been that of temporary and dazzling success in the beginning, followed by long and sad perplexities in the continuance, and often, by utter ruin in the end; that in a word, in every age and nation of Christendom, and much more of heathendom, just this welcome by the Church of these abominations has always been *their* grand support and sanction, and *its* source of weakness and decay. No, you know all this too well. Eighteen hundred years of bitter experience are your testimony from the past. Be it ours then to interrogate the present. And I ask, what is the experience in this thing, of our own times and our own missionaries?

Begin we with caste in India,—that which all missionaries set down as the grand social obstruction to the Gospel—that which you and the Board (Rep. p. 7), describe, as “causing to the mass of the people hereditary and deep degradation, leading to the most inhuman and contemptuous feelings and conduct in social life, and presenting most formidable barriers to every species of improvement.” This, iniquity though it be, in the per-

son of supposed converts, has been welcomed to the East Indian Churches. With what results? True, the Committee, in their historical statement, p. 17, say that coming together thus "around the Lord's table," some have "there had the feeling of brotherhood to all who love the Lord Jesus powerfully wrought upon and developed, and so have gained strength and grace to trample the monster under foot." But they do not say that all, or even most of those so admitted and trained have done it. Nor do they give a solitary proof, that what has been so gained, might not have been more than gained by a different proceeding. Let us see then if there be not some farther testimony on the subject.

In the year 1836, the Rev. Hollis Read, a missionary of the Board in India, published his memoirs of "the converted Brahmin"—(how like to "believing masters.") His name was Babajee. On his conversion he abandoned at once and forever, all his old heathen customs, and particularly his concubinage and caste. The one (vol. I., pp. 31, 32, 48) became at once, in his view, "adultery," and as to the other, "there is no caste to spirit," and he would have none to the body. "He would eat with foreigners, and had almost continually some one of low caste about his house. More than once he bade several inmates of the poor-house, persons of the lowest caste, to dinner, and partook with them himself." Most thoroughly was he quit of the whole thing and all its connected usages and superstitions.


His old heathen works and worship were thrown off together. *He was a spiritual, living, zealous Christian.* But not so the other converts. Less thorough in their separation from these things, the many are described as subjects of constant embarrassment or discipline, the few only as consistent and regular in their walk, while of all

Mr. Read says (vol. II., p. 136)—“ After making all the allowance we can for the force of habit, and the mental degradation of these converts, still there remains a melancholy and mysterious fact in reference to them, *that the influences of the Holy Spirit are so much withheld*”—in other terms, that they are not spiritual, living and active Christians.

And as to the spread of the Gospel in Southern India, Mr. Read (vol. II., p. 137, &c.) adds—“ They have not, it is feared, in that part of the country, embraced Christianity, but Christianity has been made to embrace them ; and instead of imparting her purity and simplicity, as she is wont to do, she has been loaded with the filthy rags of impure rites and customs, and caste, prejudice and superstition ; and she is now exhibited throughout those regions of darkness more in the form of a ludicrous comedian than as an angel of light.” This was said with reference, particularly, to the missions there of the English Church. And in these the toleration had gone to such lengths, that as early as 1833, the Bishop of Calcutta had set about a reformation, as the only means of saving the missions. In a charge delivered to the missionaries and clergy of South India, in December 1834, the bishop said—“ The main barrier to all permanent improvement is, as I trust, in a way of removal, the *heathen usages* of caste in the Christian Churches. While the master-minds of Schwartz and Gericke remained to keep down the attendant heathen practices, caste was comparatively harmless. It seemed more of a civil distinction. But I rejoice to find that the judgment of all my brethren and the whole body of Christian Protestant missionaries, without exception, concurs now with my own, that the crisis had arrived, and that nothing but the total abolition of all heathen usages connected

with this anti-Christian and anti-social system, *could save these missions.* * * An isthmus cast up between Christ and Belial, a bridge left standing for retreat to paganism, a citadel kept erect within the Christian enclosure for the great adversary's occupation, is what the Gospel cannot tolerate. *The Jesuits' proceedings in China are warnings enough to you."*

I wish I could quote at length, to show what these usages were—how completely, in fact, they had changed Christianity to heathenism; and how desperate the struggle, and how imperfect still the work of reformation. But omitting this, what, at this hour, are we hearing from our own mission Churches touching their lesser toleration of this sin? Why, at the very time you and the Board are vindicating their proceeding, the intelligence is coming home, that the missionaries are finding out that Leviathan is not so tamed; that this easy, accommodating and quiet way will never do; that they cannot go forward effectively in their work against idolatry, except as they put and keep caste uncompromisingly out of the Church; that in now attempting this they breed a storm, all the worse for being a departure from former practice; and that in persevering in their new stand, they find their chief embarrassments in the contrary practice, and these same Schwartz Churches, who still adhere to the old regime. And, at the same moment, the venerable Dr. Scudder is saying also, in your own Seminary at Cincinnati, (Watch. of Valley, Jan. 29), that he "is convinced that they erred at first in granting any toleration to this absurdity; that they ought to have required every candidate for the Church to renounce it; and that it is now more difficult to break it down, and more difficult too to establish right principles on the subject, than if they had begun right."



Honorable confession! And in contradiction of it, and all the other testimony, will you and the Prudential Committee still maintain, that such things "can, among the heathen at least, be best corrected in the Church?"

And what now of bringing the "oppressive ruler" within the Church, that he may be there "*led* to dispense justice to his subjects?" What have we gained against oppression at the Sandwich Islands, that we had not gained by a bolder and more uncompromising course in respect to admission to the Church? Rather, what have we not lost? To what an alarming extent is Christianity at this hour dishonored and reproached, and the power of Christian discipline withered and broken at those islands, because of oppressive chiefs, extortioners in the full sense of the term, seated in the bosom of the Church, above the reach of discipline, at the same moment that they continue their extortions, and not unfrequently in other ways, set the purity and the power of Christ's house equally at defiance? And should the missionaries, by the assumption of essentially prelatical power, now attempt a stricter regimen, how are the dangers multiplied, that sooner than submit to it, such chiefs, and with them their dependants, if indeed they do not become persecutors, will drift away to a reckless indifferentism and contempt of all religion, or to the bosom of some mother Church, which will give them a Christianity as easy and accommodating as that the missionaries first taught and they embraced? Even under existing restraints, are not such tendencies appearing? How much more, if these were what they should and must be, before the Gospel should have done its appropriate work there, and the Church, not the State, shall stand forth truly, in the face of high and low, as "*The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*?" The Sandwich Island ex-

periment, brother, is not ended. It has had its temporary and dazzling success. It is passing now to its second stage. And every day is adding fresh proof to the truth, that sooner than welcome prevailing social abominations to the Church in the persons of supposed converts, the whole work of such admission needs to be done over again, or the honor and power of Christ's house are gone forever. There is no use in disguising the case to ourselves. Better look at it fairly, in season to apply the remedy. And believe me, on the authority of persons now there, and as human nature is true to itself, and there is a God in heaven, the installing of iniquity in the person of "the oppressive ruler," in the Church, must, if not remedied, work the same results in the Sandwich Islands as in ancient Rome. Reformation at fearful risks and disadvantages, or gradual degeneracy and ultimate decay, is the certain and only alternative before that mission.

And what, finally, of welcoming the "*master*" to the Church, that he may be "*prepared* to break the bonds of the slave?" More than a quarter of a century has gone by, since among the Cherokees and Choctaws the process of taking this abomination into the Church for its correction was begun? What now, on the shewing of the parties, is the result? Is not slavery as rife and virulent there, in Church and State, as ever? During this same period, and in spite of this reformatory process, has not slavery increased in the Church? And in the State, have not laws been passed, "which prohibit teaching slaves to read, throw impediments in the way of emancipation, restrict slaves in the possession of property, and embarrass the residence of free negroes among them?" Do not members of the Church who once taught their slaves to read, now in deference to

these ungodly laws omit it? Do not the missionaries, so far from lifting up their voice in true prophetic style against them, do similar deference—declaring that neither they, nor “the members of the Churches under their care regard themselves as responsible” for them, members though they are of the body politic? Do they not justify their guilty silence and acquiescence by the faithless plea, that they see “the wolf coming;” that any “direct interference” on their part would only make the matter worse? Nay, do they not in effect, and some of them in terms say, that to put slavery out of the Churches even, will be to put themselves out of their fields of labor—that they cannot drive it from the Lord’s table, except it drive them from the Indian domain? And do not you and the Board give in to all this? Do you not deliberately affirm, and ask the Churches to believe, “that any express directions, requiring the missionaries to adopt a course of proceeding on this subject essentially different from that which they have hitherto pursued, would be fraught with disastrous consequences to the mission, to the Indians, and to the African race among them?” And do not you and they, therefore, after commending the missionaries as faithful, leave the whole case in such shape, that Dr. Hawes himself is obliged to confess, that the result contains nothing which looks to the tolerance of slavery in those Churches, merely as a temporary, and not as a permanent thing? For aught that appears, then, on the showing of the parties, permanent slavery in the Churches, or the persecution and possible destruction of the missions, is the result of more than a quarter of a century’s experience of this lauded process of correcting slavery among the Indians—an experience which shows the missionaries and the Churches speechless, powerless and

enslaved, in presence of the very iniquity they thought to correct! So true is it, that here, as everywhere, the seating of such abominations, in the persons of supposed disciples, in the Church, is at once *their* strength and life, and *its* weakness and decay.

If then, brother, "no missions from the beginning of the world to the present time have ever been conducted on such a principle" as I advocate, is it not time that some should be? Has not the other principle been tried long enough and with sufficiently sad results? Are not the mischiefs of acting upon it, as seen in our own experience, to say nothing of others, sufficient to demand a change? In truth, have you not, at this hour, the full confession of our oldest mission abroad, that in acting on your principle they began wrong, and find it harder to establish a correct practice now, than if they had begun right? And shall not such experience and confession be decisive? They must—they will.

Brother, I have done. I have written, not for victory, but to set forth what seems to me the simple truth of God. As such, I submit it to your consideration. If in any important particular, you shall show me wrong, I hope to be open to conviction and ready to embrace the truth. If in anything you think my spirit bad, leave it to speak for itself, show yourself a better, and I will stand reprov'd and try to copy your example. As I did not begin with compliments, so I shall not end with them—much less prate to you of my spirit and my prayers, and read you homilies in regard to yours. I think I mean well, and believe you do; and sure I am that both of us have much to learn, before, in matter or in method, we shall fully know the heights and depths of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

Yours for the truth,

A. A. PHELPS.



REVIEW OF DR. BACON.

NO. I.

MESSRS. EDITORS :


I REJOICE that Dr. Bacon has at length "written to express his deep and long-matured convictions" on the slavery question, "and thus to discharge his own soul of a burthen which he felt that God had laid upon him." For one, I thank him for it. Good will doubtless come of it—albeit it is not quite clear that all parts of the burthen, as uttered, are exactly from the Lord. It is to be hoped that others, of similar character and standing, will feel a like "burden" constraining them to speak. For though no one may give us the exact and whole truth, a free and full discussion, carried on by many minds, will, in the end, sift away the chaff and give us the wheat. Anything, then, rather than silence, inaction and indifference in respect to the great question of our country and time.

When Dr. Bacon commenced his letters, it was my full purpose, on account of my health and other engagements, not to engage in any reply. I hoped there would be nothing in them so personally and directly affecting me or the Anti-Slavery Society as to render it necessary; and if not, I wished to leave the field open to others, deeming it quite my share of the general discussion to reply to Messrs. Stowe and Beecher in the Boston Recorder. And now, that, for reasons which need not be named, I have deemed it my duty to say something in reply, I shall be very sorry to be regarded

as having a monopoly of the field. The plan and limits I propose to myself, will by no means cover the whole ground, but only what seem to me its most important parts.

There are many things in Dr. Bacon's letters which every friend of freedom and every abolitionist cannot but heartily approve. There are admissions made and positions assumed, which, once acted on by the ministers, Churches and benevolent associations of the free States, will constitute a great practical advance upon anything they have heretofore said or done.

1. In respect to the American Board, Dr. Bacon admits, that as the subject of slavery has been brought to its attention from time to time, "there has *seemed* to be some sort of reluctance to meet the question face to face." He admits that the stereotyped plea of not turning aside from the one great object is mere words—"that much has been said, and *to very little purpose*, about the 'one object' of the Board, the propagation of the Gospel, and about the impropriety of turning aside from that great and good work, for the sake of settling questions about slavery, or for the sake of co-operating in particular schemes of reformation." And more, he admits that if the distinctive principle of the Anti-Slavery Society on the subject of slavery be right, the anti-slavery members of the Board are right in what they ask of it, and that the Board ought to grant their request, and in so doing would not be turning *aside* from its appropriate work—"that nothing is more palpable than that if the Anti-Slavery Society, as represented by its publications and its Executive officers, is right, * * then it is the duty of the Board, as a Society instituted for the one purpose of propagating the Gospel, to say so outright without regard to consequences, and



to instruct its Prudential Committee, and all its agents and missionaries, to adopt that principle unswervingly in all its applications." Whether the anti-slavery principle be what Dr. Bacon describes it, and whether whatever it be, it be right, or be only "a miserable, paltering, juggling sophism," as he thinks, will be the subject of future inquiry. Meanwhile, let these admissions be remembered—that the Board has been seemingly reluctant to meet the question; that the plea of "one object," with which they have so often put it by, is a vain plea; that in calling the attention of the Board to the subject, its anti-slavery members have but acted in accordance with their distinctive principle; and that if that principle be right, the Board, its officers, agents and missionaries, ought to say and do all that they ask of them. We thank Dr. Bacon for this.

Dr. Bacon speaks of a wide-spread scandal respecting the "Southern Churches" on the subject of slavery, and suggests a mode of removing it, or of withdrawing farther fellowship with them. Nothing would gratify abolitionists more than to see Dr. Bacon and his associates *do* the things proposed. At the same time, I must be allowed to say, that the Doctor is greatly mistaken in supposing that the scandal alleged by "common fame" concerns only the "*Southern Churches*," or is limited to mere maltreatment. That scandal extends to the *holding* of human beings as property, as well as the *using* them as such. And "common fame" charges that men who do both these are in Northern as well as Southern Churches—that there are those, especially in Northern city Churches, who not only hold and use men as property, but who, as the non-resident proprietors of Southern plantations, leave their slaves "in the power of a mere hireling, a low and brutal overseer." and men

too, who have not been taught "the Gospel only under the forms of a 'hard shell' antinomianism." It admits of doubt, then, whether the discipline, whatever it be, which is attempted, should be so geographical as Dr. Bacon represents. If it be, it will not be strange, should the "Southern Churches," when put upon their defence, remind him and his associates of certain non-resident slaveholders in their own Churches, and suggest a proper administration of discipline to them.

But perhaps the Doctor means, after all, not to summon any one "infected region," as such, to the trial, but only to urge the adoption of some general instructions and rules of proceeding applicable alike to all Churches having slaveholding members, whether North or South. Let, then, the things proposed, and as proposed, be *done if they can be*. If they cannot, or if being done there is yet a scandal to be removed, let the public mind settle down in the conviction of the principles and facts, which the Doctor now admits and alleges—let it come to believe and feel that it is the prerogative and duty of the pulpit and the Churches to give true instruction, and administer true discipline on this subject, whatever they may be; that where they do this, slavery must be a transient thing; that where they do not do it, they are, so far, false to their trusts; and where they are thus false, other Churches and ministers, after due remonstrance, are to withdraw from all Christian fellowship with them; that for gross and scandalous delinquency in this thing, the time has come to put Southern Churches, ministers and members on the proof, before the world, of their Christian character; and that *if* the abolitionists are right in their distinctive principle, the Churches and American Board ought to yield, on the subject of discipline, all they ask—let these things be


settled as convictions, in the public mind, and I have no fear, that free discussion and the Spirit and Providence of God will not do the rest.

DR. BACON'S ABUSE.

I wish I could speak as approvingly of all the Doctor has written. But I cannot. If I have read many portions of his letters with sincere pleasure, I have read others with utter disgust. Of these I must now speak. The title of his letters is a gross misnomer, fitted only to misinform and mislead the public. His statement of "the leading facts of the case" betrays great ignorance of the facts or great want of candor in their presentation. His statement of the question at issue is erroneous. And in his dogmatical, insolent, and contemptuous abuse of abolitionists generally, and of the Anti-Slavery Society and its Committee in particular, he has really out-Baconed Bacon.

I have no heart to quote, or to reply at any length, to Dr. Bacon's abuse. Nor indeed is it needful, seeing it has long since become so stereotyped and stale as to be quite harmless to its intended objects. And yet for the Doctor's sake, if nothing more, and in the hope that a decent self-respect, if nothing else, may cure him of it, or at least work some amendment, it deserves a passing notice. Remember, then, that he is the Rev. Leonard Bacon, D.D., pastor of the principal Congregational church in New Haven, member of the Corporation of Yale College, a prominent and leading member of the General Association of Connecticut; that from this elevated and influential position he now proposes to give forth his "deep and long-matured convictions;" that he does this to instruct both the wise and the foolish, and discharge his own soul of a burthen from

the Lord ; and then see with what meekness he instructs those that he agrees with and yet does not agree with. Ours is "that erratic philanthropy which has usurped the name of abolitionism." We are of "those whose feelings are more than a match for their wisdom." I am complimented on my capacity at the expense of my honesty and of others' capacity—I knew so much that I "needed not, like some others, to retail the stereotyped common-places of fourth-rate anti-slavery lecturers." And as to the Anti-Slavery Society, "the one only characteristic principle of it is a miserable, paltering, juggling sophism, that can have no better effect than to mislead and madden enthusiastic minds, and to irritate the passions of the slaveholder while it sears his conscience." The Rev. Mr. Webster and others are cautioned not to "put themselves into a position in which they must appear very much like tools in the hands of other men," and they are reminded of a better guide than "the transcendental formulæ of the Anti-Slavery Society or the movements of its Executive Committee"—as if the one were likely to be duped, and the others were knaves enough to dupe them if they could. Our distinctive principle is likened also to "your patent nostrum—your hydropathic bandages—your homœopathic powders—your 'magical pain-extractor,' " &c. Our definition of it, or of what we mean by slaveholding, "is a fraud upon ourselves and the public—an abuse of words, fit only to juggle with—the fountain-head of a perpetual stream of sophistry—is not true as a definition—neither as an averment of what *we* understand by slaveholding." And, as if this were not enough, our "calumnies are thrown about as 'thick as leaves in Vallambrosa ;'" our "libels are scattered broadcast over all the North ;" and to crown all, we are incapable of



appreciating a just and honorable motive—we are told in advance, in respect to these very letters, that “a question will be raised about my (the Dr.’s) motives; or rather they will be represented as unquestionably selfish and base;” that “it seems not,” indeed, “to enter into the thoughts of those writers, that a man who differs from them on this most complicated subject, may possibly be honest.” And so on, *usque ad nauseam*.

I confess I cannot equal or answer such utterances. They transcend altogether my powers and my taste. No more can I think that the Lord had much to do in their enunciation; or that they speak very favorably of the Doctor’s temper or his manners. Be it, which I do not admit, that the abolitionists as a body, and the Anti-Slavery Society in particular, are as great dolts, sophists, jugglers, calumniators, libellers, and slanderers as the Doctor continually represents, is it for him, occupying his position, bearing his office, setting himself especially to the work of their instruction and correction, to return evil for evil? When they reason weakly, shall he sneer? When they act waywardly, shall he curse? When they revile, shall he rail? When they clamor, shall he brawl? To all of the Doctor’s abuse then, I have only to answer—*Leonard Bacon, is it not time for such a man as you to be ashamed? Show yourself the “soft answer” that you demand, and see if it does not “turn away wrath.”*

HISTORY AND MISCELLANY OF THE QUESTION.

Dr. Bacon entitles his letters “The collision between the Anti-Slavery Society and the American Board,” and his representation of the manner in which the subject of slavery has been brought to the attention of the Board from time to time, is in keeping with such *title*.

The "Anti-Slavery Society," or the "anti-slavery leaders," as such, have been at the bottom of, or prominently active in the whole thing, and all with a view to bring the Board of Foreign Missions into an auxiliary relation to the Anti-Slavery Society," in the expectation that "then surely the anti-slavery cause would triumph!" In this way he represents the question to have come up at the late meeting of the Board in Brooklyn. Slaveholders had been admitted to some of the mission Churches. "This fact," says he, "having been seized upon by the Anti-Slavery Society, memorials were sent to the Board from some very respectable sources," &c. And the whole current of the letters, on this point, is to the same effect.

This representation of the case is an entire mistake. It is such a caricature and misstatement of the real facts, that I see not how Dr. Bacon could allow himself to make it. The truth is, so far as I know, no anti-slavery society, and no anti-slavery committee, as such, has ever approached the Board in any way on the subject; and "anti-slavery leaders" have done much less in the case than is generally supposed, and no more than as members and friends of the Board it was both their right and duty to do. The true facts are briefly these.

The subject was first brought to the attention of the Prudential Committee of the Board, in the early part of 1836, by certain students at Oberlin. In this case a single individual first wrote in the way of inquiry; and afterwards the correspondence was conducted by a committee, appointed for the purpose by the Oberlin Monthly Concert of Prayer. The subject of complaint was the buying of slaves with the Board's funds, and retaining them as slaves until they had worked themselves free. And in the whole transaction no anti-slavery

society, local or general, had anything to do. Indeed the whole correspondence was completed, and the decision of the Committee, a favorable one, arrived at, before either the practice of the missionaries, or the fact of the correspondence came to the knowledge of the Anti-Slavery Society, or its Committee, or the "anti-slavery leaders." The subject was next brought to the attention of the Board in 1840, by "a memorial," as the report of the Board states, "from sundry Congregational and Presbyterian ministers in the State of New York." It was a single memorial, got up evidently without concert, headed by the Rev. Asa Rand, signed by only fourteen persons, not more than one of whom could be regarded as an "anti-slavery leader," and he not an agent, but a resident; and the whole thing was completed and sent to the Board, without the knowledge or agency of the Anti-Slavery Society or its Committee. In 1841 another memorial was presented—only one. It came from persons styling themselves "ministers in New Hampshire, and most of them honorary members of the Board." It was signed by only seventeen individuals. None of them were "anti-slavery leaders." Some of them were not even abolitionists. All take care to distinguish themselves from the ultras. "We know," say they, "that you have been goaded in unchristian methods, and have been censured for carrying out plans that were neither wise nor good." They of course ask no such plans, and represent no such persons. They speak for another class altogether. They tell the Board, that "there is a deep feeling of disapprobation in the community;" that "it is not confined to those who dealt in denunciation towards all who did not conform to their precise method of opposing slavery," but that "the sober and considerate ministers and mem-

bers of our Churches, who have from the first been the firm and true friends of the Board, are distressed." And surely Dr. Bacon, even, will not charge this upon "the Anti-Slavery Society," or the "anti-slavery leaders." And these—a single correspondence and two solitary memorials, originated spontaneously, without any general concert, and completed and sent to the Committee and the Board, without the agency or even knowledge of "the Anti-Slavery Society," or the "anti-slavery leaders"—these constitute the whole "collision" with the Board on this subject, in the way of direct appeal, by *anybody* up to 1841.

In 1842 the fact came out that the Board had a slaveholder in their employ. The New York Evangelist and kindred *religious* papers, as well as the anti-slavery papers took up the subject, discussing it freely, and insisting that if he did not emancipate his slaves, his connection with the Board ought to cease. So far as such *discussion* went, "the collision" was as real, if not as serious, between these religious papers and the Board, as between the anti-slavery papers and the Board. In the way of memorial, there was now, for the first time, some concert of action, and as the result, more petitions. Still it was in no proper sense the work of "the Anti-Slavery Society," or the "anti-slavery leaders." They neither originated nor conducted the movement at all—unless indeed I except myself. But what I did, was done only at the last, and after I knew that the subject was coming up from other sources, and solely with the view of having the exact issue fully and fairly before the Board. All I did was done as an individual and a supporter of the Board. I was then, moreover, in my official relations, pastor of the Maverick church in East Boston, and General Agent of the Boston City Missionary Society. And if Dr. Ba-

con will have me stand for everybody now, and will insist that what I say and do on this subject is not to be regarded as my own individual action as a member of the Board, but as that only of my official relations, why then the "collision" of 1842 was "The Collision of the Maverick church in East Boston, and the Boston City Missionary Society with the American Board!"

A single memorial from a single Church was all that the Board was troubled with in 1843. In 1844 the Board was beset with three petitions!—one "from members of the Trinitarian church in Fitchburg," another from "members of the John street church in Lowell," and a third from twelve "highly respectable ministers and seven laymen"—so the Report of the Board describes them. But not one of these was suggested, originated or prepared by "the Anti-Slavery Society," or "anti-slavery leaders." The last had special reference to the admission of slaveholders to the mission Churches. It brought to the notice of the Board and the public the fact that has originated the whole of the recent discussions. But it was *one* memorial, not "memorials," as Dr. Bacon states. And it was prepared, circulated and presented by the individual, or his pastor, to whom, from personal conversation with a missionary, the fact became first known, and was not originated at all, as Dr. Bacon represents, from "the fact" in question "having been seized upon by the Anti-Slavery Society." That fact was at that time scarcely known to "the Anti-Slavery Society." It had indeed been named to me, by the individual referred to, and some conversation was had about a petition; but the whole thing was prepared and matured by him; and I, from the mere fact to be sure that when completed it was not presented to me, was not even one of its signers. So completely from the

beginning up to that which has originated the whole recent discussion, has there been an entire absence, in all these applications, of any such agency of the "Anti-Slavery Society," or "anti-slavery leaders," as Dr. Bacon represents. Why, who does not know, that if "the Anti-Slavery Society," or the "anti-slavery leaders," at any period since 1836, had sought, as Dr. Bacon gravely represents, to make capital out of the Board, in the silly idea, that if they "could only bring it into an auxiliary relation to the Anti-Slavery Society, then surely the anti-slavery cause would triumph," and had accordingly set themselves to the work, they could have originated and sent to the Board, from year to year, a thousand memorials in the place of two, three, or a straggling one? No, to the last, and the utmost, they have avoided the collision, which Dr. Bacon represents them to have eagerly sought.

But the report of 1844 put a new face upon affairs. It was officially admitted that slaveholders were in the mission Churches, and had been received from time to time, and were retained, without objection or question on account of their slaveholding. Nor was there any pretence, that this had been done only in extreme and excepted, and not in ordinary cases. Yet, with a full knowledge of this, confirmed at the time by a missionary fresh from the field, the Board, by its committee, declared "that so far as at present informed, they see no reason to charge the missionaries with either a *violation or neglect of duty*." Still, "to obtain that exact and complete information which is indispensably necessary to a full and satisfactory report," the committee asked to be continued another year. They were continued. During the year they made all needful inquiry, and at the following annual meeting in Brooklyn, they made

their complete report. In this, the facts of the case were stated with great particularity. There were numbers of slaveholders (thirty-five at least) in the mission Churches. They were ordinary slaveholders. No pretence was made that they were of those whose cases might fairly be regarded as exceptions to the general rule. They had been received, from time to time, for a quarter of a century. Some of them had been members for years and were still retained. Not one of them had been led, through the instructions of the missionaries or their administration of discipline, to manumit his slaves. In one solitary case, one solitary slave, "highly esteemed for his intelligence and exemplary piety," had indeed "been left by the *will* of his master, manager of his property and virtually the guardian of his orphan child and heir." But it does not appear that even he was left *free*, or that any arrangement was made by which, after having been "manager" of the estate and "guardian" of the heir, he will not, finally, be only a part of the one and the slave of the other. And yet with these and kindred circumstances fully admitted in the case, the Board, by the deliberate and complete report of its committee, declare "that the missionaries among these Indians have been faithful in their work," "that any express directions from this Board, requiring them to adopt a course of proceeding on this subject essentially different from that which they have hitherto pursued, would be fraught with disastrous consequences to the mission, the Indians; and the African race among them."

At this meeting of the Board, two more memorials, originated, drafted and adopted without the agency or even knowledge of the "Anti-Slavery Society," were sent in. They came from two large and respectable ministerial associations in Massachusetts—which eccle-

siastical bodies, Dr. Bacon being authority, are of course "the Anti-Slavery Society."

Following the startling disclosures and position of the Board in 1844, several individuals, including myself, felt that the time had come to look the whole subject of the Board's relations to slavery fully and resolutely in the face—to know and meet the worst of it. I accordingly prepared a series of questions, and obtained such signatures to them as I conveniently could. They were designed to bring out full and exact information on all the points involved; and were duly presented to the officers of the Board. But they were not answered—the officers said, "for obvious reasons." The whole correspondence, with accompanying remarks, was prepared for the press, and its publication sought, in vain, in the ordinary religious papers. All this time my official relations were those of pastor of the Maverick church, &c., not Secretary of "the Anti-Slavery Society." Some two months after, my official relations were changed; and then, for the first time, and only because refused access to the public in the ordinary and unofficial channels, the discussion was brought, in its present form, into the Anti-Slavery Reporter. Previously it had been brought there only as a record of passing events, and in the way of a free and general criticism—the same as the transactions of other bodies and parties.


Here then we are. Dr. Bacon has well said, that "the general question," thus brought before the Board, is the same with that "which is urged as a practical question upon all the Churches in the United States." It is the same. It is the broad, deep, vital question—"What has the Christian Church to do with slavery?" In bringing it before the Board, "the Anti-Slavery Society" had no agency whatever. Having been brought

there by other means, if now the Society, because of the action of its Secretary, and the introduction of the discussion in the manner stated in the Reporter, is in collision with the Board, it is only at the very last, and when the Board, by the practice of its missionaries and its justification of it, has placed itself, deliberately and unequivocally, where the Society must come in conflict with it, or give up its whole doctrine touching the duty, on this subject, of the Christian Church.

And here let me say, if I must stand for the Society, that no pains have been spared by the Society, and by such anti-slavery friends of the Board as the Rev. Dr. Ide, to secure a common ground on which the several parties in the case could meet, and by which farther collision should be prevented. There is such ground. By personal conference and otherwise it was, in substance, distinctly before the committee when they met to mature their report. Kindred suggestions were made by such men as Dr. Ide. They will have a different reception at some future time. The report was presented and discussed. Amendments were offered; and even then "the Anti-Slavery Society," if Dr. Bacon will have it so, sought to secure a harmonious result. That Society said to the Central Church in New Haven, and to the Lane Theological Seminary, that if they would insert the word "hold" in the amendment offered by the Central Church (for why not know us all in our distinctive official relations, and not as individual members of the Board) so that "the master who *holds*, buys and sells human beings as merchandise for gain," should be subject to discipline, that "the Anti-Slavery Society" would accept of the Central Church's amendment in place of his own—albeit he did not like the phrase "for gain," deeming it an erroneous qualifica-

tion, or at best a needless incumbrance. And the Central Church and Lane Seminary said they would be willing to do it. But they went to committee, and ——! Perhaps they had as good reasons for changing their minds, and uniting with those that spurned all conciliation, as Mr. Webster had for changing his about presenting a minority report—concerning which the Central Church in his letters makes so much ado, and takes so much pains to set off to Mr. Webster's disadvantage.

The quietness with which Dr. Bacon voted aside his own amendment, was not less a matter of grief than of surprise to many who were present, and who regarded it as an advance upon the report. He offered it himself as an improvement. The Rev. Dr. BEECHER, referring to the subject in his letters in the Boston Recorder, says—"I wished it to be made more plain (than in the report) that they allowed of nothing but a *temporary* toleration of slaveholding in the Indian Churches, * * and that a more full indication should be made, that in the great controversy of our nation, their sympathies were with the oppressed, and against the oppressor. Had the resolutions drawn up by Dr. Bacon been adopted, they would in this respect have met my views." The Rev. Mr. WEBSTER, whose satisfaction with the resolutions, but not with the report, seems quite to puzzle the Doctor, regarded them as advancing a *principle* which the report did not—viz. : that slaveholding is to be regarded as *prima facie* against Christian character. He said, according to the reporter of the Boston Recorder, "The report does not assert that slaveholding is *prima facie* evidence of a wrong state of heart, and I fear if it goes out as it is (without Dr. B.'s resolutions) the general impression will



be, that there is a loophole in it for all who may wish to have slaves." The editor of the Recorder, commenting on the proceedings said—"It (the report) so treats slaveholding, that for aught we can see, it may be *perpetuated* in the Mission Churches unrebuked. We deeply regretted that the special committee did not see fit to recommend the adoption of Dr. Bacon's resolutions; for had they done so, their recommendation would have been cheerfully responded to, and the report would have taken a more decided anti-slavery character." The correspondent of the Boston Traveller, whom I know not, said—"Certain I am, that many went away grieved that Dr. Bacon's amendment did not pass, or at least something like it; and many more will be grieved when they come to look into the matter." The impression was general that the resolutions were an advance upon the report. But this, it now appears, was all a mistake. Dr. Bacon has since *proved* that they are perfectly identical; or rather, that the report of the two expresses his "sentiments more fully, and with even more of a technically anti-slavery tone!"

Dr. Bacon, *hypothetically*, explains himself. "If" certain men should say to him certain things, he "should feel at once that an element not before contemplated was to be taken into the account; and that whatever advantages would result from the amendment in one direction, might be counterbalanced by the disadvantages in another quarter." Doubtless; and "the other substantial reasons," alluded to by Dr. Tappan, may have been another "element" to be considered. Accordingly, though not himself "fully convinced" of the dangers thus hypothetically supposed and alleged, Dr. Bacon "could and did acquiesce in the decision of the majority" of the Committee. But that

this, when confirmed by the Board, was a rejection of his amendment, he will not allow for a moment. He wonders that I can so represent it. He will not impute to me "any intentional misrepresentation" in doing so. But then the truth is, "the Board did not 'distinctly reject' the resolutions proposed by him. * * The *only* amendment rejected 'was Mr. Phelps's *second* amendment.'"

I did suppose, I confess, when the report and the two amendments were referred to the Special Committee, and that Committee reported in favor of adopting the report, and against adopting the amendments, either with or without the report, and the Board accepted their recommendation, that this was a distinct, if not direct rejection of both amendments. Dr. Beecher and the others just quoted seem to have had some such vague idea. But I stand corrected; and the more readily, as it gives a chance, not to say a hope, for my *first* amendment. The second is gone—hopelessly. But the first was no more "rejected" than Dr. Bacon's. If then at any future time, either in committee or out of it, in addition to the considerations hinted at by Dr. Bacon, there should be a private understanding that my amendment shall be sent to the missionaries, and made the basis of the instructions given to them; if a Secretary of the Board shall tell me he will see it done; and if afterwards, by concurrence of the Prudential Committee, this shall actually be done, though it may look a little like favoritism and assumption of authority, I, perhaps, can and shall "acquiesce in the decision of the majority"—albeit I may find it somewhat difficult to prove the exact identity of my amendment and the report, and especially to show that the report brings out my principles "more fully;

and with even more of a technically anti-slavery tone."

Thus much for the history and the miscellany of the question. What the question is; who the parties to it are, and how it should be met, will next claim attention.

REPLY TO DR. BACON.

No. II.

WHAT HAVE CHRISTIAN MINISTERS AND CHURCHES TO
DO WITH SLAVERY?

DR. BACON represents "the general question which has come up before the Board of Missions," as the same with that "which is urged as a practical question upon all the Churches of the United States"—he might have added, of the world. It is the same—one question, having only different specific applications. And it is as he states it—"What is the natural and legitimate action of Christianity against slavery? * * What has Church government to do with it?"

To this inquiry, one would think, admitted iniquity as slavery is, that the ready answer would be, to "have no fellowship with it, but rather reprove it," like all other "works of darkness;" and lest there should be any room in any case, for mistake and misconstruction, to avoid not only the reality but even the "appearance" of the evil. But this is too summary and sweeping a disposition

of the question to satisfy Dr. Bacon. Accordingly, it is the leading object of his letters to discuss this question.

Dr. Bacon's statements of the question, as it came before the Board at Brooklyn and is urged upon the Churches now, and his reasonings concerning it, are singularly confused and self-contradictory. The full illustration of this, if attempted at all, must be reserved until after the anniversaries. For the present, and for the purpose of presenting the question as it really is, it is sufficient to say that Dr. B. everywhere confounds the *things sought*—the making of slaveholding a disciplinable offence, or the exclusion of slaveholders from the Church—with the *grounds on which* it was sought; and spends his whole strength in discussing those grounds upon which, though believed to be tenable, it confessedly, as a practical question, was not sought, and has scarce a word concerning those grounds upon which, as common grounds, it was sought.

What was the question really and practically before the Board at Brooklyn? My second amendment was as follows:—

“And finally, in accordance with and in reply to the memorials submitted to it from Worcester county and elsewhere at its present meeting, the Board deem it right and proper to say that its funds cannot and will not be expended in maintaining slaveholding missionaries, or building up slaveholding Churches; that in carrying out the principles laid down in the first part of the foregoing report, in their practical application to the question of receiving slaveholders to and retaining them in the missionary Churches, the Board will expect its missionaries and Churches to treat slaveholding, in the matter of instruction, admonition and discipline, in the same manner as they should and would treat drunkenness, gaming, falsehood, bigamy, idolatry and the like; and that


whenever and wherever it shall appear that the missionaries and the Churches, in the exercise of their appropriate liberty, do not do so, it will be the duty of this Board, in the exercise of its liberty, to dissolve farther connection with them."

Now, there is not a word here to the effect that the mere *power*, whether natural or civil, or the mere *legal relation*, by virtue of which one has the *legal* power to hold another as a slave, shall be deemed disciplinable, but only the *exercise* of that power, whichever it be, in the actual *holding* of its victim. It was the personal act of *holding* somebody, and of holding that somebody as a *slave*, and only this, that the Board was asked to consider and treat as a disciplinable offence.

Moreover, the Board was not asked to make even slaveholding, in its ordinary, common and every-day sense, disciplinable on *distinctively* anti-slavery grounds. Not a word was said in the amendment, of any of the grounds on which it should be done. It was only asked that it be done on *some* grounds, leaving the whole question of *what* grounds entirely open. The Board was not asked to affirm as its reasons or grounds for doing it, that slaveholding is, in itself, in all cases sinful; or that the mere legal relation is so; or that slaveholders were not admitted to the apostolic Churches. These were adverted to in the discussion as good and tenable grounds; but the Board was not asked to place its action upon these or any other, real or supposed, *distinctive* anti-slavery grounds. The amendment urged nothing of the kind. And in the discussion of the amendment it was distinctly stated, that all that was asked was the general result, on such common and general grounds as all could unite in, while respecting distinctive and disputed grounds the parties would agree to differ—the Board

neither affirming nor denying these, and adverting to them, if at all, only as points on which its several members were divided, and concerning which it therefore passed no judgment. The simple, sole and whole request was, that slaveholding be treated as disciplinable, on the ground of its being of itself sinful as a general rule, and where not so, on the ground of its being of evil tendency and bad example—furnishing occasion of reproach, and leading others to stumble and sin. All that Dr. Bacon says, therefore, in opposition to the *distinctive anti-slavery* grounds, whether true or false with reference to them, is wholly irrelevant to the question really and practically before the Board. Those grounds may all be untenable (and whether they are or are not, it was distinctly said we do not ask the Board to decide), but if they are, it may yet be that there are other grounds on which the general conclusion should follow. Those grounds are, that where clearly sinful of itself, slaveholding be disciplinable on that ground; and where not so, on the lower and broader ground of its evil tendency and example. And it was precisely on these grounds, and not on any distinctively anti-slavery grounds, that the Board was urged to place its action. And it is with reference to these that Dr. Bacon's letters have scarcely touched the question, as practically before the Board and the Churches.

Nor was the Board asked to make the mere fact of slaveholding, in the first instance, for even these reasons, anything more than *prima facie* evidence against the individual's piety. He was still to have instruction, entreaty, persuasion, remonstrance. And it was only as persisted in against all reasonable instruction and admonition, that his slaveholding was to be his excision from Christ's house. All this lies on the face of the



amendment, and was distinctly stated at the time. According to the Boston Traveller, I then said expressly—"I differ from Dr. Bacon in this respect. I would treat slave-holding as *prima facie* evidence against a man, just as I would drunkenness or any other vice." According to the Boston Recorder, I said—"Dr Bacon and others would have no objection made to a man's piety because he is a slave-holder. I would make slave-holding *prima facie* evidence against a man, so as on this ground to raise the question of his piety. Then in deciding this question, I would proceed as in respect to other acknowledged sins." Dr. Bacon seems now to admit that "holding of a slave" is thus "*prima facie* evidence" against the slaveholder, "and puts upon him the burthen of showing that he is actually loving mercy, doing justly, and walking humbly before God." But there was nothing of this at Brooklyn. It was not in the report, or the resolutions, or the speeches. So far from it, it was just here that the two parties were then specially at odds. If now they are agreed, whether it be the result of progress or of only a better mutual understanding, it is certainly cause of congratulation. It only remains to agree further, that that which is *prima facie* against a man at the outset, shall be conclusive against him, or at least against his standing in the Church, when persisted in against all reasonable instruction, persuasion, entreaty, and admonition.

Such was the question as it came before the Board at Brooklyn, in reference to the mission Churches. And such, substantially, is the question now urged, as a practical question, upon the Churches and ecclesiastical bodies. It is not that the *power* to hold a slave, whether the power of one's own right arm or of the civil law, shall be disciplined, but the *exercise* of that power in the actual

holding of him, and holding of him as a *slave*. And despite the dictum of Dr. Bacon, since, in the terms of the law, in the decisions of the courts, in the daily and universal practice, and in the definitions of nearly all respectable modern writers, such as Whewell, Pond, Barnes, and scores of others, to be a *slave* is to be another's *property*, to be held as a *slave* is to be held as *property*; and *slaveholding*, as the proposed subject of discipline, when considered separately from its corresponding and accompanying treatment, is just *holding men as property*. Nor has Dr. Bacon any right to turn aside the term to any other meaning. Its true import is that which the law, the courts, the daily practice, and the general current of respectable definition give it—*holding human beings as property*.

Now it is this, in all its forms, that anti-slavery men would exclude, by due processes of discipline, from all the Churches. *They* would do it on the higher and distinctive ground of its universal and intrinsic sinfulness, and of its having been excluded from the apostolic Churches. But some of their brethren cannot unite with them in this. Very well, they say, there are other and broader grounds; we will meet you there. Say, if you will, that while we differ in regard to the universal and intrinsic sinfulness of slaveholding, and its admission to the apostolic Churches, we agree that as it is *generally* practised it is sinful, and that where not clearly sinful, it is of evil tendency and example and doubtful propriety, and that on *these* grounds, in this day of greater light, it shall be excluded from the Churches, and we will meet you here. We will meet you in the common result, on these as the common grounds.


Here then are two plans for bringing the discipline of the Church to bear against slavery. The one pro-

poses to direct it specially and chiefly, though not exclusively, against slaveholding itself, as the generic and comprehensive abuse that is at once the seat and soul of all specific and subordinate abuses. The other proposes to direct it mainly, if not wholly, against the specific abuses. The first of these is the plan of the abolitionists—the second that of Dr. Bacon and his associates. Which is the true and practically efficacious one? Which ought the Churches now to adopt? Each has its advantages and disadvantages: Dr. Bacon's is good so far as it goes; and for one, I bid him God-speed in every attempt to work it; and so that it does not involve the surrender of a better, will help him work it, and rejoice heartily in every good accomplished by it. But after all, can it, to any practical purpose, be worked? Has any such plan, to any effective purpose, ever been worked? If ever so successfully worked, is the remedy it proposes as broad and deep as the disease? Is it the plan, then, for the Churches to lean and expend their strength upon? Dismissing, for the present, the metaphysics of the question, let us look at it simply as a practical and common sense one. I object then to this plan.

1. That it is too indefinite to be worked to any considerable practical effect. Dr. Bacon himself complains that he is continually misunderstood, both by friend and foe. And I venture to add, that scarcely any two of those who suppose they agree with him, would agree in stating precisely what he would and would not have disciplined. As to the *holding* of a slave, his *resolutions* do not propose to extend discipline to it at all. His letters would seem to do so, in some cases and to some extent, but in precisely what cases and how far, it is impossible to decide. Only this we know, that if there were ten thousand cases like that of his model

slaveholder, no Church on earth would have any right to exclude one of them from its communion. True, "the exercise of a despotic power in any *specific form of injustice or oppression*," is to "be the subject matter of censure." But the trouble is to identify and catch one of these "specific forms." The actual *holding* one as a slave is not such. It does, to be sure, look a little awkward, "creates some presumption of guilt," and may constitute "at least an occasion for investigation!" But on investigation it may appear, though continued indefinitely, to be the master's virtue and not his blame; its continuance indeed a duty; and where to draw the line between innocence and guilt, we are not with any definiteness informed. Something is said about its being done "for gain," but whether this means for sheer speculation, as the negro traders buy and sell, or for the necessary support of one's family, and the payment of one's debts, or for the joint advantage of both parties—the master of course being sole arbiter of the arrangement, and taking care to secure the lion's share, this and such as this, Dr. Bacon does not explain.

The same indefiniteness obtains in regard to the specific forms of maltreatment named. There is scarcely one of them on which, except in cases glaringly atrocious, if a man were brought to trial he could be convicted. In the cases most commonly occurring within the Church, there could be no conviction. A man, for instance, is charged with "not *recognizing*, in respect to his servants, the divine sanctity of their relations as husbands and wives, and as parents and children." Now what facts, how many, and of what nature, must be produced to prove this charge? And what two men would be agreed in any particular case as to just what not recognizing is? What room to plead the rigors of the law,



the poverty of the master, the insubordination of the slave, the necessities of the case? Another is charged with "permitting his slaves to live and die in ignorance of God and God's word." What is such "permitting," and what such "ignorance," and on what testimony is the man to be convicted? How much religious instruction must one give his slave to keep clear of censure? Another is charged with "buying and selling human beings as merchandize, for gain." What is *such* buying and selling? Does it mean selling for necessary and benevolent uses—to eke out the support of one's family, or pay one's honest debts, or give something to benevolent purposes? Does it mean selling as a punishment for misconduct and insubordination? Does it mean reaping any personal advantage whatever from the sale? Or does it mean selling, as the negro traders sell, as a mere speculation? And when you are agreed as to the thing, by what facts and what testimony are you to prove it, against the protestations of the master to the contrary? How prove on him a different motive and end from that which he alleges? In glaringly atrocious cases it might be done. But how shall it be done in the many and the more common cases occurring within the Church, and by virtue of which, if there be no discipline, the whole scheme is a practical failure?

In my next, I propose to show that Dr. Bacon's plan has been tried, for more than a quarter of a century, by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and failed; and that the time has clearly come for the adoption of some more effective scheme of discipline.

REPLY TO DR. BACON.

NO. III.

DR. BACON'S SCHEME IMPRACTICABLE AND INEFFICACIOUS.

My health, the coming anniversaries, and the consequent crowded state of the columns of the *Evangelist*, compel me to condense in this article what, for its full practical effect, ought to be expanded to two such articles. I have shown that Dr. Bacon's scheme of discipline is intrinsically so indefinite, that it cannot be made practically effective to any considerable extent. I now add—

2. If carried out, in all its details, it would not remove the scandal complained of. It does not propose to do more than make every professor of religion who holds slaves, such a slaveholder as is the Doctor's model one. Only let them be such as he, and we are told beforehand, that no Church on earth would have any right to touch them with its discipline. But the scandal complained of is that of *holding* slaves, not less than that of *abusing* them in other respects. It concerns the generic abuse, not less than the specific. And if it could be told to-day, that every slaveholder in the land is such a one as Dr. Bacon's model, impartial Christendom would only cry out the more, All shame that such men should set such examples! and no logic about legal relations, and the slave's good, and such like, could ever silence that cry.

3. I have yet to learn of any religious communion that has ever been cleared of slavery and its scandals by any such process. Perhaps Dr. B. knows of such.

But if he does, is it not a little remarkable that in the whole of his long discussion, not one solitary instance of the kind is cited or hinted at, as confirmatory of his views ?

4. Dr. Bacon's scheme has been tried, and proved a failure. To say nothing of other cases, it has been tried, to no purpose, for more than a quarter of a century, on the broad scale of the American Presbyterian Church. The experiment has been full and decisive. Its steps, character and result are these. It began, substantially, as far back as 1787. In that year the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, then the highest judicatory and representative of American Presbyterianism, gave its "judgment" on the subject of slavery, as follows :

"The Synod do highly approve of the general principles in favor of universal liberty that prevail in America, and the interest which many of the States have taken in promoting the abolition of slavery. They earnestly recommend it to all the members belonging to their communion, to give those persons who are at present held in servitude, *such good education as to prepare them for the better enjoyment of freedom.* And they moreover recommend that masters, wherever they find servants disposed to make a just improvement of the privilege, would *give them a peculium, or grant them sufficient time and sufficient means of procuring their own liberty at a moderate rate ;* that thereby they may be brought into society, with those habits of industry that may render them useful citizens. And, finally, they recommend it to all their people to use the most prudent measures, consistent with the interests and the state of civil society in the countries where they live, to procure eventually the final abolition of slavery in America."

This "judgment" was formally re-adopted by the General Assembly (the successor of the Synod) in 1793

and 1815. Thus nearly sixty years since, the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church enjoined upon all its members a course of proceeding in reference to their slaves, which is even an advance upon Dr. Bacon's model.

In 1815 the question came before the Assembly of holding communion with slaveholders. The Assembly decided that this was allowable. At the same time, however, they re-affirm the "judgment" of 1787 and 1793; and they add:

"The Assembly assure all the Churches under their care, that they view with the deepest concern any vestiges of slavery which may exist in our country;" and they "observe that although in some sections of our country, under certain circumstances, the transfer of slaves may be unavoidable, yet they consider the buying and selling of slaves by way of traffic, and all undue severity in the management of them, as inconsistent with the Spirit of the Gospel. And they recommend it to the Sessions under their care, to make use of all prudent measures in their power to prevent such shameful and unrighteous conduct."

We have thus Dr. Bacon's plan, substantially enjoined again, and in 1815 it was re-affirmed and re-enjoined. But in 1818, we have "A full expression of the Assembly's Views of Slavery." In that document, speaking as the exponent of the law of the Church, the Assembly say:

"We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves; and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ. * * Hence, it is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day,

when the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest and unwearied endeavors to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible throughout the world."

And the Assembly specially enjoin this duty upon those who live in the midst of slavery. Sympathizing tenderly with them in the circumstances in which they are placed, the Assembly yet say :—

"We earnestly exhort them to continue, and if possible, to increase their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery. We exhort them to suffer no greater delay to take place in this most interesting concern, than a regard to the public welfare *truly* and *indispensably* demands."

These and kindred sentiments are connected, it is true, with a recommendation of the American Colonization Society. But the Assembly go on and say farther :—

"We recommend to all the members of our religious denomination, not only to permit, but to facilitate and encourage the instruction of their slaves, in the principles and duties of the Christian religion; by granting them liberty to attend on the preaching of the Gospel, when they have the opportunity; by favoring the instruction of them in Sabbath schools, wherever those schools can be formed; and by giving them all other proper advantages for acquiring the knowledge of their duty both to God and man. * * We enjoin it on all Church Sessions and Presbyteries under the care of this Assembly, to discountenance, and, as far as possible, to prevent all cruelty, of whatever kind, in the treatment of slaves; especially the cruelty of separating husband and wife, parents and children; and that which

consists in selling slaves to those who will either themselves deprive these unhappy people of the blessings of the Gospel, or who will transport them to places where the Gospel is not proclaimed, or where it is forbidden to slaves to attend upon its institutions. The manifest violation of the injunction here given, in its true spirit and intention, ought to be considered as just ground for the discipline and censures of the Church. And if it shall ever happen that a Christian professor, in our communion, shall sell a slave who is also in communion and good standing with our Church, contrary to his or her will and inclination, it ought immediately to claim the attention of the proper Church judicature; and unless there be such peculiar circumstances attending the case as can but seldom happen, it ought to be followed, without delay, by a suspension of the offender from all the privileges of the Church, till he repent, and make all the reparation in his power to the injured party."

"Now I submit, if in all its essential principles and details, and with even more of definite specification, we have not here Dr. Bacon's plan of discipline entire—deliberately and solemnly proclaimed and enjoined, by her highest judicature, as the judgment and law of the Church; and standing as such for more than a quarter of a century? Has it done its work? Why, Dr. Bacon being witness, so far from being effective, "a great scandal" has come up under it, "which for some twenty years has been continually growing, till it has become offensive to the moral sense of Christendom;" and "a 'common fame' has spread through this land, and has been sounded out to the ends of the world, which charges upon the Southern Churches, indiscriminately, a scandalous neglect of Christian discipline—that members in full communion, office bearers, ministers commit, uncensured and habitually, crimes which cause the name of Christ to be blasphemed." And, I

ask, shall the Churches and ecclesiastical bodies now re-adopt and lean upon a scheme of discipline, that has thus notoriously proved its impotence in an experience of twenty-eight years? Suppose the General Assembly, profiting by Dr. Bacon's suggestion, should "take notice of this 'crying fame,' " and should "enjoin on all Presbyteries and Church Sessions to inquire whether any of the ministers or members under their care are guilty of the sins thus charged, to visit such offenders with due censure, and to report hereafter whether such crimes are indeed tolerated or winked at within their respective jurisdictions;" how is this injunction to become any more practically efficacious than that of 1818? And if it does not, what can Dr. Bacon's scheme of discipline do farther?

I repeat then, the scheme has been tried, and failed. Say the Synod of Kentucky in 1834—"Cases have occurred in our own denomination, where professors of the religion of mercy have torn the mother from her children, and sent her into a merciless and returnless exile. *Yet acts of discipline have rarely followed such conduct.*" Indeed, I challenge one well authenticated case, from the year 1818 to the present hour, of discipline against a Presbyterian for any of the abuses in question. Such a case may perhaps be produced, but I have yet to learn its existence. The truth is, the whole scheme is essentially and necessarily impotent. And no process of inquiry can do more than galvanize it into a temporary but deceptive life. And the same must be true of every scheme that does not lay the axe at the root of the tree—that does not direct the discipline of the Church, primarily and mainly, against slaveholding itself, as the great generic and comprehensive abuse, that at once embraces and is the seat and soul of all others.

Such, in distinction from Dr. Bacon's, is the scheme of the abolitionists. And the question now is, shall the Churches and ecclesiastical bodies adopt and urge this.

THE TRUE SCHEME STATED AND URGED.

The plan, observe, is to direct the discipline of the Church, primarily and mainly, against slaveholding itself. And in doing so, the question is not whether slaveholding shall be excluded from the Church because it is always manstealing, or because it is always, of itself, sinful; but if you deny *these* reasons, shall it, when persisted in against reasonable instruction and admonition, be excluded for *any* reasons? That it be so excluded for *some* reasons is the plan of the abolitionists, and of many others, who on this point, agree with them. Should this plan be adopted by the Churches and ecclesiastical bodies? I say, yes—

1. Because it presents a simple, intelligible, tangible and practicable point of attack upon the monster iniquity.

2. Because it meets and removes the whole scandal complained of. It lays the axe at the root of the tree. It sweeps away the generic and comprehensive abuse, and with it the specific abuses, and thereby clears Christ's house at once of slavery and all its scandals. It makes a clean and short work of it, in righteousness.

3. It is in harmony with the received ecclesiastical standards and the common ecclesiastical usage. The Presbyterian Book of Discipline declares that, "an offence is *anything* in the *principles or practice* of a Church member, which is *contrary to the word of God*; or which, if it be not in its *own nature* sinful, *may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification.*" And it is notorious, that in the common and general usage

of the Churches and ecclesiastical bodies, discipline is actually administered on these principles. All over the land, in their standards and in their actual administration, they are daily telling the world that men may and ought to be excluded from the Christian Church for things that only "tempt others to sin or mar their spiritual edification," as well as for those that are of their "own nature sinful"—that occasions of reproach and stones of stumbling, not less than clear and manifest iniquity, are to be put away. Acting on these principles, they extensively proscribe dancing, marrying a deceased wife's sister, and even being an Odd-Fellow. And shall they now say that slaveholding is not as bad as these? Rather shall they not say, that in all *ordinary* cases it is clearly "contrary to the word of God" and of "its own nature sinful;" and that in those cases where it may *seem* to be otherwise, it is at least of such doubtful propriety and evil example, that it "may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification," and therefore on one or other of these grounds, must be put away from the Church? And is not anything short of this a clear violation of their own standards, and a palpable contradiction of their own usage in other cases?

4. The exclusion of slaveholding from the Church on such grounds is also scriptural. So far as clearly sinful, there surely can be no dispute. And so far as it is not so, who will deny (for it is of *bona fide* slaveholding we are speaking) that it is of doubtful propriety, of evil tendency, of bad example, an occasion of reproach, a temptation to sin, and as such, if nothing worse, to be excluded from Christ's house? Nor will it vary the case, if, so far as not sinful, slaveholding was not thus excluded from the apostolic Churches. For that which from the circumstances of those times might be no re-

proach, may now, in the altered circumstances and clear light of the eighteenth century, be a burning shame. Such it clearly is ; and as such it is scriptural, in vindication of Christ's honor, to put it away from his house.

5. This scheme of discipline presents a common ground, on which all who really wish slavery and its scandals removed from the Church, can and ought to unite. Dr. Bacon need not affirm "the anti-slavery formula." I need not admit his. Here we consent to differ. Dr. Bacon can say, can he not, that slaveholding, as generally practised in this country, is sinful, and where it is so, should be excluded from the Church on this ground? Very well, abolitionists agree to that. Dr. Bacon can say, can he not, (for it is of real slaveholding that we speak) that where not clearly sinful, it is, at least, of doubtful propriety, of evil example, an occasion of reproach, a temptation to sin, and as such, persisted in, should be put away from Christ's house? Or if *he* cannot say all this, cannot Christians and ministers generally say it? Very well, abolitionists agree to this. Why then shall not Christians and ministers generally agree on this as common ground? And if Dr. Bacon, or any one else, has a pink of a slaveholder, that he thinks should be saved from the operation of the rule, very well, meet the case, when it comes, on its merits—only let it be understood, that if it be a case of *real, bona fide slaveholding*, it comes of course, for one reason or the other, under the rule; while if it be not, it has nothing to do with the question in hand, and least of all, is it to be allowed to set aside the rule, and shape the whole discipline of the Church to its accommodation.

6. This scheme of discipline has always been effective when tried. The Society of Friends tried it more than half a century ago, and it worked to admiration.

Nearly fifty years since, the Reformed Presbyterians of this country adopted it, and it worked equally well. Both connexions were entirely cleared of slavery and its scandals, and with scarcely any loss of members, while numbers who had before retained their slaves gave them their freedom.

7. No lower discipline can meet the rising sentiment of the Churches and the age, and the man is behind his age who supposes it. The sincere and earnest friends of religion and of the slave, everywhere and of every name, are fast coming to the conclusion that Christianity and slavery cannot, for any considerable time, co-exist; that there is an utter incompatibility between them; and that no teaching or discipline of the one can have any substantial, practical efficacy against the other, which is not directed primarily, mainly, and rigidly against the thing itself, rather than its abuses. The Christian world is becoming tired and sick to loathing of this fruitless tinkering with specific abuses, while the great and comprehensive abuse is left untouched. And attempt it who may, either in Church or State, enlightened and *disinterested* Christendom will not much longer endure it.

I had intended here to present an array of testimony, which, I doubt not, would have surprised many and been impressive to all; but for the reasons already intimated, I must be content with the merest summary. The simple truth is, that spite of all reasonings and influences to the contrary, the plain, sober, substantial, disinterested and common-sense piety of the world is coming rapidly and extensively to the conclusion, that *it will not have slaveholding within the pale of its Christian fellowship*. At home, the indications of its decision to this effect are on every hand, and in almost every religi-

ous denomination. They are too many and various to be even named here. The specification cannot extend to all the cases in which Churches and ecclesiastical bodies have declared, in *terms*, that they will exclude slaveholding from their communion. The Free Will Baptist Connection, with its one thousand one hundred churches, and great numbers of Calvinistic Baptist Churches and ecclesiastical bodies, as well as Methodist, have done this. But of these I cannot speak. As more pertinent to the present discussion, I can only refer to bodies that may be considered as represented in the American Board, and particularly in the New School General Assembly and here, can speak only of those that have expressly made slaveholding, after due admonition, exclusion from the Church.

What then are *some* of the facts on this particular point? All are not in my possession. I cite only such as lie before me. Let me say then, that at one time or another, and in one form or another, the following Presbyterian bodies have fully taken the ground that slaveholding—not its abuses merely, should, by due process of discipline, be excluded from the Church, viz. :—the Synods of Michigan, Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, Illinois, Peoria. These Synods include twenty-seven or more Presbyteries. A large portion of these Presbyteries have also taken distinct action of their own, to the same effect as the synodical. In addition, connected with other Synods, the same ground has been taken by the *Presbyteries* of Champlain, Otsego, Onondaga, Genesee, Niagara, Angelica, Montrose, Meadville, Grand River, Huron. In all then, and this is by no means a complete list, six Synods, and from thirty to forty Presbyteries, representing full one-third of the New School Presbyterianism of the country, have already

declared for the discipline that is directed, primarily and mainly, at slaveholding itself; and makes it, after due admonition, exclusion from Christ's house. Now add to these the Synods and Presbyteries that at different times, and in language similar to that of the Synod of Utica in 1835, have declared that they "regard slaveholding, as it exists in these United States, as repugnant both to the letter and the spirit of the Gospel—a flagrant violation of the law of God—a sin against God and man;" or, in the language of the Synod of Western Reserve in 1837, "that the sin of holding men in slavery, like all other sins, should be immediately repented of and forsaken by those guilty of it"—add, I say, all the Presbyterian bodies that have so spoken, of which there is surely a goodly number; and then add those that would have so spoken but for repressing influences, better known than described, and no honor to anybody; and I ask, if the time has not come, and more than come, for New School Presbyterians, at least, to have done with the discipline that merely tinkers at abuses, in the stupid hope of killing the tree by pruning its excrescences?

And Dr. Bacon, I think, will hardly contend, that the Congregational piety of New England and the free States is not as far advanced, in this respect, as that of its Presbyterian sister. If he does, he will not need to live long to learn his mistake. From New York westward, it is even more advanced, and has given free expression to itself. It is *as* advanced in New England. To a considerable extent, in the action of individual Churches and local associations or conferences, it has also spoken its judgment. To a much greater extent it is ready to do it. Facts could be given in proof, were it needful. Everywhere, among all those bodies and

classes of Christians who are the principal patrons of the American Board, the sentiment is prevailing and becoming deep-toned, that *slaveholding* must have no place in the Christian Church. And not "the Anti-Slavery Society," but all the *ministers, churches, and religious bodies*, that for *any* reason take this ground, are the party, on the one side, to the question that was—and is—before the Board.

And abroad, surely, British Christianity is settled in the conviction of the fruitlessness of all action against slavery, in Church or State, which is not directed primarily and mainly against the thing itself. It was indeed on this conviction alone, manifesting itself in a demand that could not be denied, that British slavery was itself at last abolished. This conviction is the judgment of Britain's wisest and best Christians at this hour—especially of those who correspond, denominationally, most nearly to the classes of Christians in this country just named. Accordingly, at two successive General Anti-Slavery Conventions, held in London in 1840 and 1843, and composed of delegates from different countries, such representatives of British Christianity as the Rev. J. A. James, have united with their brethren from other lands, in declaring to the world, as their "deliberate and solemn conviction," not only "that slavery, in whatever form or country it exists, is intrinsically opposed to all natural justice and genuine Christianity," but that it is "the incumbent duty of Christian communities to separate from their communion all those persons who, after having been faithfully warned, in the Spirit of the Gospel, continue in the sin of enslaving their fellow-creatures, or holding them in slavery." And by the latest intelligence it appears that no slaveholder is to be invited to the great Conven-

tion for Christian Union, to be held in August next, at London.

So true is it, that everywhere, in *disinterested* Christendom, *slaveholding* is being put without the pale of Christian fellowship. And if Drs. Bacon, Patton, Cox and others go to the great Convention, the question they will have to meet there will be just that which is now practically before the Churches here. It will not be, Why do you not labor at the abuses of slavery, in the expectation of making water run up hill and choke itself dry? Nor will it be, Why do you not hurl wide-mouthed anathemas at the system? But, Why do you not concern yourselves with the living agents who take up and administer the system, and without whose living agency the system and its legal relations are nothing? Why not direct your discipline, primarily and rigidly, against *slaveholding*? And if they say, We do not think it is man-stealing, or that it is of itself always sinful, Why then, will be the reply, do you not exclude it from your communion on lower and broader grounds? Why trample on your own standards and your own usage in other cases, in respect to this? Are you the men, and yours the Churches, to stand up in the sight of high Heaven, amid the wail of enslaved millions, and tell the world that all men are created free and equal, but that slaveholding is not as bad as dancing, or marrying a deceased wife's sister? And when these good brethren set themselves to answer this question satisfactorily to a British audience—may I be there to see! It cannot be answered, either there or here. The single issue is, that *slaveholding*, persisted in against reasonable instruction and admonition, shall, for *some* reasons, higher or lower, and by *due* process, be exclusion from the Christian Church. This alone is

the issue, really and practically, before the Churches. And they must meet it. And they must give it but one answer—else God will make them “contemptible and base before all the people,” and more than now, they will be in this the scandal of the world.

For the present, I have done. There are two other topics, which I hope, *Deo volente*, hereafter to discuss, viz. the intrinsic sinfulness of slaveholding, or of the “legal relation” so called, and the exclusion of all slaveholders from the Apostolic Churches. But I cannot do it for several weeks, perhaps months to come. Meanwhile, I leave the field to any others who may be disposed to enter it. What I have written has been in the midst of great bodily debility, and this is now of such a character as to demand a present suspension of these labors. My principal object, the vindication of the Anti-Slavery Society, and the presentation of the real question that is before the Churches, is accomplished. May the God of the oppressed guide all concerned to righteous decisions.

A. A. PHELPS.

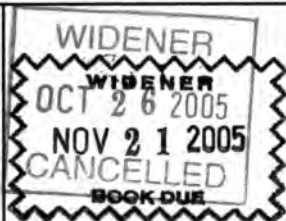


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